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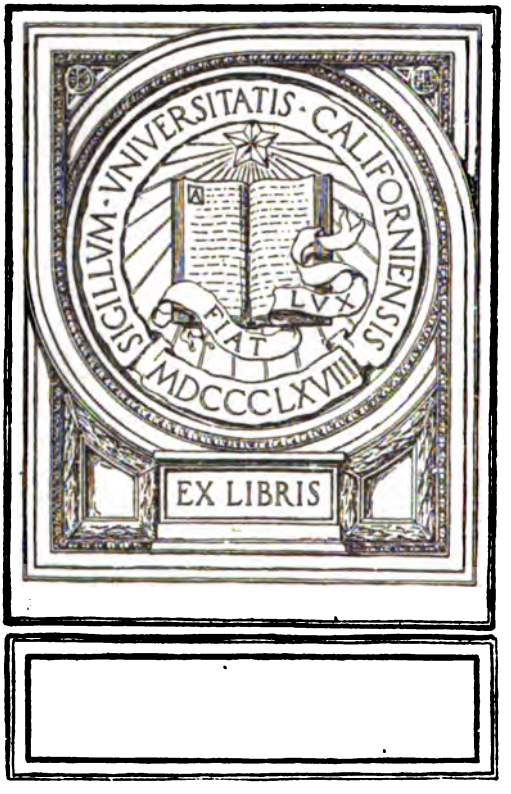

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'83 TO '87

IN THE SOUDAN

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'83 TO '87

IN THE SOUDAN

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF SIR WILLIAM HEWETT'S MISSION TO KING JOHN OF ABYSSINIA

BY

A B WYLDE

VOL I

WITH MAP

London

REMINGTON & CO PUBLISHERS

HENRIETTA STREET COVENT GARDEN

1888

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CHAPTER I.

SUAKIM IN DANGER.

NOVEMBER, 1883, will be remembered by all who had to do with the Soudan, and more especially by those who had commercial interests in the country for some years before, as it was the date when Mahdism had to be recognized as a serious power aiming at the very security and life of the Egyptian nation. The news of the total defeat and annihilation of General Hicks's force under him and Aliedeen Pasha at Melbeis was followed immediately by that of the death of Consul Moncrieff between Trinkitat and El Teb when proceeding to Tokar with a force under Mahomed Taher Pasha. These reverses made it patent to all that the rebellion was wide-spread and powerfully supported, and was fostered by religion and discontent.

In a country like the Soudan it is always difficult to explain how a fanatical wave should spread over a population which has so little reason to listen to the preachings of fanatics. In this case it produced no effect on what may be called the more enlightened portion of the Soudan Mahomedans, viz., the Soudan Mahomedan merchants or the Ashruffs, the direct descendants of the Prophet's family

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at Mecca and Medina, or the Tacroones, the inhabitants from the other side of Darfur, and their large colony at Gallabat. The most bigoted and zealous among the followers of the Mahdi were all those who had received what little education they possessed at the different dervish schools. At these the pupils are taught to repeat parts of the Koran by heart; not one pupil in five hundred can read or write; the teaching is merely oral, and hardly two dervishes preach or propound the Koran in the same manner. The pupils are naturally most bigoted, and thoroughly believe that the only way to gain Paradise is to follow the teachings of those who are considered the most holy associates of these centres of religion. These men, as a rule, have a knowledge of the Koran, which they repeat parrot fashion, it being immaterial to them whether the book be placed right way up or topsy-turvy; and if they were asked to find such and such a chapter from the book, they could not do so. Their sanctity consists in praying day and night for a certain number of years, in the unlimited repetition of Allah and its attributes. The man who can repeat for a given number of hours these words and prayers is the most looked up to by the inhabitants of the country. These dervishes receive alms from their admirers, attend at the funerals, weddings, and religious ceremonies, read prayers before sunrise and at sunset—the only two great praying times of the Soudan Mahomedans—the noon prayers on Friday. They give amulets and charms for protection against the Evil Eye, dangers of the road, and wild beasts, and bestow love philters against barrenness. They are consequently most powerful, and can influence as they please all the tribesmen with whom they are brought into communication. There can be no doubt that all the dervishes of the Eastern Soudan are thoroughly allied to

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Mahdism. Their great leader round Suakim is Sheik El Taheer Magdub, a Jaleen of Ad Damer. Ad Damer is on the banks of the Atbara, near its confluence with the Nile, and is noted for its school. From here the majority of the most respected dervishes of the Soudan have sprung.

The fanatical tribes of the Soudan or followers of the dervishes are not enough to account for the rebellion. There can be no doubt that the backbone of the movement consists of the slave dealers and all those persons discontented, who are many, with the Egyptian rule as at present administered. The state of affairs has been brought about by the Egyptians themselves: by their neglect of warnings, by their failure to improve their communications and in taking stringent measures in time, to strike when they were in a position to do so, and by temporizing with and caressing those who had already risen in rebellion.

On my return to Suakim at the close of November, 1883, the position of affairs was becoming critical. The Governor of the Eastern Soudan was Suleiman Pasha Niazi, and the commander of the forces was Mahomed Taher Pasha, both Egyptians of the very old school. The ignorance of both was lamentable, and they seemed unable to cope with the situation; personally they were unknown to the sheiks, and they did not take measures to make themselves known; they ignored what was told them, and lost valuable time when they ought to have been acting. At this period the position was far from hopeless, but by their inactivity a few days soon aggravated affairs. The action of the military commander in frittering away his forces in detail, instead of concentrating them and having some settled policy, soon bore fruit, and on the 2nd December three-fourths of the Suakim garrison marched out to Tamaai to try and open communications

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with Singat, which, though partly besieged, was still not in danger.

It proved a repetition of the march to Tokar from Trinkitat, which had taken place early in the preceding month. No sane person could ever have planned such an expedition. Common precautions were ignored, and not a friendly native was made use of. No use, either, was made of the still friendly inhabitants of the Barca Delta, nor was the Tokar garrison asked to make a joint demonstration; and when Mahomed Taher Pasha, with his 600 troops, landed at Trinkitat, they literally went loafing along in square formation, without even taking the precaution to place out scouts. From all native accounts, the Egyptian troops did not stand for the charge the Arabs made, and at first sight of the enemy began to throw away their arms, or to fire their guns at random in the air, in the hope of intimidating the Arabs. Five of the nearest enemy, in hiding in a small clump of bushes, broke one face of the square, and commenced stabbing the Egyptians; one of the Arabs was only armed with a camel stick, with which he knocked the unresisting soldiers over the head; and long before the other Arabs got near the square there was a panic, and all those in the rear part of the square were running off to Trinkitat as hard as they could go. Mahomed Taher Pasha's groom mounted his master's horse and made good his escape. The Pasha himself borrowed the horse of a Greek, saying he would rally his troops and bring them back to fight, but was in reality the first at the sea beach, leaving the Greek and three of his compatriots with Consul Moncrieff.

Why Moncrieff remained behind will never be known. He could have escaped with the Greeks if he had chosen, but knowing him so well, it is my firm belief that he thought,

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being the English Consul, and that the Greeks were also well known in the Tokar district, and that they had no cause for enmity against the Arabs, he would not be touched, as up till now the Arabs had always been friendly with the Europeans, and during the Arabi troubles, after June and July, in 1882, when the Egyptians were talking about massacring the Christians at Suakim and Tokar, the Arabs of the country had protected the Christians at both places, and given the Egyptians to understand that if one single Christian was touched they would protect them. Consul Moncrieff must have thought of this; he had latterly been to Singat and seen the natives, and was well received by them, and he had no cause for ill-feeling towards them, nor they to him; he was an English Consul in his own district, trying to find out for the Government what was the Arab cause of complaint.

I believe had Consul Moncrieff and the Greeks been outside the square and away from the Egyptians they would not have been touched, and it was only because they were found inside the square and with the Egyptians that they were killed. Moncrieff did not fire till he was attacked, and then he defended himself with two revolvers he had taken from my house, killing several Arabs before he was wounded. A cut from a sword across the thigh knocked him off his horse, and he was then speared. He was the first Consul on service who has been killed for many years.

Poor Moncrieff was most popular with Europeans and natives alike; he did not know what danger was, and was as brave as a lion. He was a hard-working and conscientious officer and an ornament to the service. He died deeply lamented and beloved by everyone, and in him I lost a dear and valued friend. His was the first English blood shed in the Soudan, for Hicks and his officers were in the Egyptian

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service, and had, therefore, thrown in their lot with Egypt. There was one consolation, his body and those of the Greeks were not mutilated like those of the Egyptians, which showed that the Arabs made a distinction between Europeans and Egyptians. Moncrieff's body was buried by a black woman, a slave girl of Suakim, who recognized it after the fight.

It is hard to say how many of the Arabs took part in this fray—if it can be called one—it was rather a massacre than anything else, as the Egyptians bolted; and I suppose they are the only people in the world that allow themselves to be slaughtered without holding up a weapon to avert their death blow. The attacking force might have mustered 200, certainly not more, and was another proof to the Arabs, and gave them confidence, that they were more than a match man for man for the Egyptians. In this engagement of El Teb the loss on the Egyptian side was about 250, that of the Arabs nearly *nil*, only a few of them having been killed and wounded when attacking Moncrieff and the Greeks.

The Egyptians arrived at Trinkitat nearly naked, having thrown off everything, I suppose in the idea that the natives would stop to pick up their clothes, rifles, and boots in preference to pursuing them, The two engagements—this of El Teb, which was not a surprise, as the Egyptians were in fighting formation, and the other which took place in a pass between Tamanieb and Singat, in which two companies were annihilated to a man—taught the Arabs that their enemies were to be beaten with great ease, and that the rifle in the hands of a bad shot is not nearly such an effective weapon as the shield and spear or sword. What a change! A year ago not an Eastern Soudani would stand up against a rifle, for he did not understand it. He saw it only in the hands of

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Europeans, mostly Englishmen, who came to the Soudan for sport. In fact, the Soudanese stood in awe of the rifle and its little bit of lead that could kill everything, from the largest of the wild beasts to the smallest of gazelles. Then one could not get five hundred Arabs to attack five Englishmen. I suppose they have learnt thoroughly the difference between the two nationalities, and now remember that they have never seen the Egyptians practising with the rifle. All rifle practice, I believe, is forbidden in the Soudan, and I have never seen any done except by the black troops at Sanheit, in Gordon's time, some of whom were good shots.

There is evidently now no more chance of a handful of Egyptians being able to bully a whole tribe of Eastern Soudanese Arabs, and the outlook is far from a bright one, and how the Egyptian will ever hereafter be able to hold his own unaided becomes the great question. On the 2nd of December, the three quarters of the Suakim garrison having been sent out, only about 300 troops, mostly old Egyptians, such as ran away with Mahomed Taher Pasha, a few Bashi Bazouks of the country, a mixed race of cross-breeds, and a few black soldiers, invalids, were left in the town. Our defences were a wretched little fort, with two Krupp guns, three mountain guns, and some smooth-bores of George the First's time. The fort was simply an old stone house of three rooms, within an earthwork with a ditch round it, situated at the outside of the milk market. Alongside of it was a stone building used as a barrack, prison, and store, capable of holding about 400 Egyptians, or about 50 to 80 English. To the north of the town of Gēf was a wretched mud and stone-built barrack, in which the two companies that generally garrisoned Suakim were stationed; this had no wall or ditch round it. Then there was a defenceless Police Station, where the police-

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men used to remain during the day; this was the Gēf side of the milk market. South of the town, that is, in the direction of Tokar or Tamaai, there was no defence at all. In the harbour were two Egyptian gunboats, on which Suleiman Pasha Niazi and Mahomed Taher Pasha lived, and our English gunboat, H.M.S. *Ranger*, which was destined to play an important part in the defence of the town.

In the town and Gēf the people were divided in opinion. Some few we knew to be entirely in favour of the Mahdi; these were the followers of Sheik el Taher Magdub and his dervishes, and the whole of the Digni family. The majority of the inhabitants had everything to lose by the rebellion, as they made all their money out of the merchants and the cotton cleaning factories; they were, however, not to be counted on to give any great help when in the hands of such Pashas as were present at the time, who, by living afloat with their belongings, did not inspire great confidence. Many townspeople came to visit me, and I could see how alarmed they were for the safety of their friends in the country, and how surprised they were at the behaviour of the natives. They one and all were in a great fright for their property, and openly talked of the likelihood of the town being attacked. Everything, they said, was "very bad": government, Pashas, troops, natives, and the whole business; and they could not see the end of it. I tried to laugh at their fears, and put the best face on affairs, but I could not help feeling that everything was far from well, and that they all expected great events to take place.

There was no doubt that if the natives were alarmed at the action the tribes were taking, that we too, who

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did not know them so well as they did, had also cause for alarm in the inexplicable change that had come over them. I could see, and the natives also mentioned it, that Gordon, by his good government and help, had educated the Soudanese up to having a feeling of their own; and how far the oppression of the Egyptians had worked on the people, was hard to say. Certainly among my visitors there were few who had any love for Egyptian rule, and still less for the new teachings of Mahdism and its division of property. They were not imbued with the same feeling as those outside, as they had mixed a little with Europeans and merchants, were civilized, and could see that although it was possible for them by making sacrifices to live with this new element of Mahdism, it was impossible for the Christian to do so; they made their living out of the Christian, and as long as he remained in Suakim they could too.

I could not sleep much that evening for thinking of what would be the end of the question, how little was understood of it by the inhabitants themselves, of their entire want of confidence in the Egyptians, and how little the Egyptians were capable of helping themselves, or of drawing the still unaffected tribes round them as allies. Remove the Christians and the English gunboat, and the town would have had to join Osman.

The next morning, after having visited H.M.S. *Ranger*, I was taking a walk round Gēf when a staff-officer appeared from the front from the force sent out to Tamaai. I happened to be passing the head-quarter tent situated on the open, where the milk bazaar was held, and so called in to see if Mahomed Taher Pasha had any news. He informed me that a fight had taken place that

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morning at Tamaai, and that there had been a great victory, and Osman Digna, he believed, had been killed, but if I would call in later I should be told the news. The commanding officer of the Eastern Soudan had sent out three-fourths of his force, and had not accompanied it. In the afternoon I went back to head-quarters, and found one or two more people had come in—at least another staff-officer and some Bashi Bazouk cavalry. I was now told that a great battle had been fought, the enemy had been entirely defeated with awful slaughter, Osman Digna had been killed, and that they were then going to send out some natives to bring in his head and those of the other big rebel sheiks who had been killed. I saw three natives go out on camel back, and the farce of presenting them with a sack to bring back the heads in was gone through. I then went to the encampment of the blacks. Some few invalids had been left behind to look after the heavy baggage and the men's effects.

From one of the blacks, who looked a perfect fiend with rage, I got the first idea of what had taken place—viz., the utter defeat of the force. I had this black's word against that of the General's and his staff-officers, and I believed the black, curiously enough, in preference to the others. I went back to the island, and on my way saw many people hurrying towards the wells at Sharter to get news. The wells of the Soudan are always the great gossiping places, and the Sharter wells are about a mile from the town. Round them are gardens and big shady trees, where we often used to go for a picnic and a shoot when the passage dove and quail were in. Before sunset we had heard nearly all the details of the fight in the morning, but curiously enough Mahomed Taher Pasha still denied the troops were beaten.

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The force that had marched out the night before consisted of some 700 blacks, 300 Egyptians and old soldiers, and about 30 Bashi Bazouk cavalry, under the command of Colonel Cassim Effendi, a man very popular and not a bad fellow, though not by any means a soldier, but what even this country wants more than a parade officer—namely, a sportsman, and one thoroughly well up in bush fighting. The troops had only a few biscuits with them, and very little water, not enough for the march, which was to be nominally to Singat *vid* Tamaai and Tamanieb, where water was to be procured. The only animals taken with them were a few transport camels with ammunition. Nothing happened on the march till Tamaai was reached, when a few natives were seen and a few shots were fired; the cavalry, on seeing the enemy, had come in for protection to the square. When on Khor Ghob at Tamaai more of the enemy were seen, and in large numbers; these the blacks, who were leading, also dispersed, and the water was made for, many of the troops now suffering from thirst. The cavalry were not sent out, and no scouts were placed.

While the troops were getting their water they were attacked by larger numbers of Arabs, who made direct for the square. Seeing the blacks in good formation, and holding three of the four sides of the square, the attack was delivered on the rear side of the square, composed of the Egyptians. The cavalry then broke through the blacks to get inside the square, and the Egyptians gave way without waiting for the Arabs to get to close quarters; this deciding the action, and throwing the square into confusion. The cavalry broke out of the square, and bolted for Suakim *vid* the open ground by the lower part of the plain or the seaside. The fight was all over in about a quarter of

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an hour, only 23 cavalry returning to Suakim, and 17 blacks and Bashi Bazouks, the rest being killed on the banks of Khor Ghob, and with them Cassim Effendi their leader, the Colonel of the Massowah black regiment.

Suakim that night was in a perfect panic, and I never before saw such terror-stricken people. The position was, no doubt, critical, and had the Arabs attacked us that night they could have carried all before them, as the town was a perfectly open one, and no defence was organized. Had the enemy come into Gĕf he could have burnt and looted the place, and the English man-of-war could not have opened fire, as friend and foe would have been killed indiscriminately. The two Egyptian men-of-war were out of harm's way, behind the Government House, with a Pasha on board of each, and evidently, for stategical purposes, both boats had their cables hove short and steam up. Not a thought was given to the women and children of the town, and only a few of the friends of the Egyptians were allowed on board with their valuables and the Government treasure chest.

Brewster Bey, the Collector of Customs, and I did what we could to allay the fears of the inhabitants; the causeway gate was closed, and Captain Darwall, of H.M.S. *Ranger*, kindly said that if an attack took place he would send his boats off to my yard to take off any refugees among the Europeans and Arabs of the town. My house and yard were to be the meeting place. In case of an attack they could be easily defended, and we could muster perhaps thirty Europeans well armed with breech-loading rifles and shot-guns, and no doubt we could have held our own till aid arrived from afloat. Needless to say we looked out all our cartridges, cleaned our guns, and were prepared to sell our lives as dearly as possible had we been by any chance attacked.

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How slowly the hours passed that night, and what excitement there was!—women crying in the streets, no one in bed, and a crowd of people outside in the open space between my house and the Custom House with their little valuables and jewellery in bundles and boxes. Hour after hour wore on without any attack, and soon after midnight most of the people returned to their houses, as it was not likely that an attack would take place so late, and some said a messenger had arrived from Tamaai, saying that the Arabs were resting after the mauling the blacks had given them, and that until the sheiks had agreed what to do no forward movement would be made. We trusted the information was true.

I was glad when morning came, and when it did Brewster and I were not long in deciding what line to adopt. None of the Europeans were taken into the councils and meetings of the Pashas, nor was our advice or influence asked for; it was patent, in fact, that if we did not look after ourselves we should get no protection from the Egyptians, as they were too busy looking after themselves to care for us.

I went down to head-quarters into the Commander-in-Chief's tent and asked Mahomed Taher Pasha what he intended to do. He was in a fright, but still was civil. I am afraid I was not, as I told him that in European countries and everywhere I had been to it was not the custom for senior officers to skulk on board ship in time of danger, but to look after the defences of the town and the lives of the people under their charge. While talking to him a Sergeant of the black regiment came back from the front. The poor fellow was dead-beat from hunger and thirst. As soon as he got inside the tent he sat down from exhaustion. The Pasha called him a son of a dog, and bade him get up; and the Aide-de-Camp, who was the first to run away the day

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before and arrive at Suakim, spat at him. This was enough for me, and I gave the pair of cowards a bit of my mind. I told them they ought to be ashamed of themselves after their behaviour, daring to speak to such a man and to treat him in the way they did. Disgusted at their behaviour I walked out of the tent to the quarter of the blacks and sat down and waited till the Sergeant came.

As soon as he saw me he remembered having met me at Sanheit, when I was there with Gordon Pasha, and I was greatly touched by his simple tale of the disaster. He and a few others had managed to fight their way through the Arabs to the bush that runs from close to Khor Ghob to Suakim, and as he and one or two of the others were good shots they managed to keep off the Arabs, who evidently did not consider it a paying game to attack such men, so let them go off. The Sergeant had only a few of his 80 rounds left. He told the oft-repeated Soudan and Abyssinian war tale, namely, that the Egyptians had broken the formation, and then everything was over; that the Arabs outnumbered them at first, and when once the formation was broken a lot more Arabs came. He put down the force that he saw at about 4,000 men at least, of which perhaps the half had attacked them, and said the Arabs had lost heavily at first before the blacks were broken.

The position now was most critical. There were no troops nearer than Massowah, and it was said that none could be spared from there on account of the Abyssinians threatening the road to Sanheit and the environs of Massowah. In the Eastern Soudan, in the Suakim district, there was a small garrison at Tokar, which was entirely cut off; another at Singat, under the brave Tewfik Bey; and some few Bashi Bazouks at Roweyah on the sea coast, some

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120 miles to the north. The only place to look to for aid was from Egypt, and it remained to be seen what was to be sent from there. Berber district was still free from Mahdism and revolt, so were Cassala, Sanheit, and Massowah, which was now the only road into the interior that was safe. Khartoum to Berber was also safe, and the Mahdi was still engaged with the Darfur and Kordofan district; but where the troops were to come from, and who was to take up the reins and get the team together again, we at Suakim did not know.

Brewster and I were the only Europeans who could act before succour arrived, and we immediately, after having a conference with the leading Europeans and natives, were deputed to ask Captain Darwall, of H.M.S. *Ranger*, to protect us and the town of Suakim by coming inside between the mainland and the island, so that in case of attack the guns of the *Ranger* might command the causeway, the only entrance to the town of Suakim. Captain Darwall called on the Governor-General, Suleiman Pasha Niazi, and told him that at the request of the Europeans he intended to moor his ship off the causeway so as to protect them and their property in case of an attack, and that he should move his ship that afternoon. The commander of the Egyptian gunboat, who had kept his ship in a strategic position at the rear of Government House, said that he was capable of defending the town, but as he never moved his ship, nor would he move round to another post of danger at the south of the town, which was afterwards occupied by H.M.S. *Woodlark*, his words did not go for much. The only passive resistance he showed was when H.M.S. *Ranger* was moving to take up the inner berth, he seemed inclined to dispute the passage in which his ship was moored. The *Ranger* had to

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blow her steam whistle twice before he cast loose his cables to allow her to pass.

The changing of berths by H.M.'s ship was witnessed by the majority of the inhabitants of Suakim, who were very pleased, as although they knew very little of English men-of-war, they all knew the difference between the English Navy and that of the Khedive: the former carried big guns compared to the wretched old pop-guns on board the latter; ours was a marvel to them of discipline and cleanliness, and all the officers and sailors and their arms were different to the dirty, noisy officers and sailors of the latter, who knew nothing about gunnery, or anything else. There are only two men on board Egyptian men-of-war who are looked up to by the Arabs, and those are the boatswain, who sometimes has the beating of them when the Pasha wants to give them a very severe chastising, and the gunner who fires the guns.

From the time the *Ranger* took up her berth the people of Suakim slept soundly, and there was, I may say, a sense of security that we should not all be murdered in cold blood. Captain Darwall was the hero of the hour and looked upon as the safe-guard of the town. The Arabs, one and all, would have given him anything he liked to ask for, and had the Egyptian commander done the same thing and sent round for "backsheesh" he would have got a good round sum. The feeling of the Arabs was that strangers of whom they had seen very little, but of whom they had heard a good deal since July, 1882, were protecting them when the Egyptians were powerless or disinclined to do so. It greatly increased their friendliness, and they all came to tell what they knew, and from this date it was not difficult to get information,

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whereas before they were chary of having anything to do with Europeans, who they imagined were spies of the Egyptians. One thing they still believe, namely, that the Khedive pays the English for supporting him, and that all Englishmen are more or less in the pay of the Egyptians.

They are curious people, these town and desert Arabs, and never can make out what the English are about. They look upon us all as being more or less mad. One thing they are positive about, namely, that all those who have plenty of money and go up country for shooting are perfectly insane, and the proof of it is that they give all the meat away that they kill; they don't even sell it, and only keep the skins and horns of the animals, and the skins they spoil when they take them off the animals, for they cut them, and make them useless for water-skins. No Arab, however, doubts the pluck of an Englishman; they recognize that he shoots well, that he kills birds flying instead of shooting them on the ground, and that he has hands like iron with which he knocks people down instead of with a stick or a stone.

A few days made a great difference in the outside of the town. Nearly all the mat huts disappeared, there was hardly a camel, cow, sheep, or goat to be seen, and the people went where they liked, with no one to question their goings and comings. The disaffected joined their friends at Tamaai; the neutral moved north and to the mountains north-west of the town, as the Amarars so far are more or less neutral and had not joined the rebellion. Those who had thrown in their lot with the townspeople and were waiting events came into the town and within the limits of Gēf. Hardly a man or a house was left on the outside, and the big village of Sharter was nearly entirely abandoned. A bad sign in Africa is the

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disappearance of the flocks and the women and children folk, and of these hardly any were left—a sure sign that the neighbouring inhabitants expected something to happen, and that no protection can be looked for from the Egyptians. Milk used to be most plentiful, and cheap goats and sheep from half-a-dollar to two dollars and a half; now prices were three times what they were a week before, and the quality of the animals was bad.

The men-of-war are arriving. The gunboat *Coquette*, from Suez, has brought down the news that the *Woodlark* is coming from Aden, so as far as the town is concerned there is no cause for fear, although, Gêf being open, the rebels could come in at any time at night and loot and burn the place. As far as I am concerned, I should not much mind if they did, but there is no chance of their doing so, as a good many of the leading rebels own property in the town and at Gēf, and the last thing they would do would be to destroy their own property. If they did get a footing in Gēf at night time they could always be shelled out of it in the morning, as during the day-time it would be perfectly untenable, and the open space between Gēf and the nearest bush would be a fine place for machine guns to play on a retreating enemy.

We can now see what a poor chance poor Tewfik Bey has of being relieved for some time. He asked for provisions and ammunition to be sent him *viâ* the Berber road, and Suleiman Pasha Niazi tried to send him everything *viâ* Tamaai and Tamanieb, and nothing has so far reached him. The friendly Amarar tribes might before Cassim Effendi's fight have got anything to him *viâ* the Berber road, or Tewfik might have easily withdrawn his garrison and the inhabitants *viâ* this road. It is now too late. His orders were

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to hold on at Singat and act on the defensive only, and not to leave the settlement of Singat on any account; by doing so he has not been able to procure cattle from the neighbouring tribes, either by buying from the friendly people or vending the flocks of the unfriendly people. The former not being protected, and there not being enough food supplies at Singat to feed the garrison and them, they had to move off northwards in self-protection.

Tewfik Bey, although a Mahomedan, is a Cretan by birth, and not an Egyptian. He is one of the most polished and capable of Egyptian officials I have ever met, and very popular. He was managing the outbreak in a most masterly manner till interfered with by Suleiman Pasha Niazi on his return from Khartoum. He had had already three engagements in the hills towards Erkoweet with the rebels, and had killed two of Osman Digna's relations—his first cousins, Achmed Fagi and Fagi-ibn-Fagi, brothers of the late Ali Digna, head of the Suakim merchants—and in one of the engagements Osman Digna was nearly killed and taken prisoner. He was wounded in two places and his right arm badly broken above the wrist by a bullet. His followers had nearly dispersed, and he had not had time to get them together from Suakim and Tokar, nor had the Hadendowies joined him in force. Tewfik was only waiting to collect a few more of the tribesmen, with supplies of food and ammunition from Suakim, to follow up his successes, when Suleiman Pasha Niazi arrived and put a stop to everything.

The moment this Pasha arrived on the scene he cancelled all the orders Tewfik had given. Instead of bringing up ammunition and reinforcements he sent for dresses of honour and presents, and tried feeding the wild beasts that were harrying the country with sugar instead of exterminating

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them. One would have thought he had seen enough of what Mahdism was in the Khartoum district. He had seen Hicks's and Aliedeen's forces, and knew that they had been exterminated by the Mahdi's followers, and he believed that he, an unknown Pasha, without local knowledge or experience, could succeed with other means than those Tewfik was using. Officials of this sort have been the ruin of the country. This temporizing was fatal, and was the cause of the spread of the Eastern Soudan rebellion. The Pasha, after doing all the mischief he could, and finding his policy fruitless, got frightened, and left Tewfik with instructions to remain quiet at Singat. On his return, after receiving messages to the effect that the rebellion was again spreading and that Osman Digna was receiving large reinforcements of the disaffected and converts to Mahdism, he despatched two companies of old worn-out soldiers to reinforce the Singat force, with extra rifles, ammunition, and provisions. Instead of sending them by the long route *viâ* the Berber road he despatched them by the short and mountainous road, where they were surprised in a pass and massacred to a man. This was Osman Digna's first success, and was the turning point in the state of his affairs, which, till then, were far from satisfactory. Disquieting news then began to arrive from Tokar, and Mahomed Taher Pasha's expedition, with Moncrieff, left, with the result already known.

Tewfik Bey was a great favourite at Suakim, of which he was Civil Governor. He was not only popular with the natives, but also with Europeans, with whom he associated a good deal. He was a good French scholar, and spoke the language fluently. He was studying English, and had already made great progress. He was a fair sportsman and a good rifle shot, and, in fact, very different in many

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ways from the usual run of Egyptian officials. The natives respected him, and he was firm with them, while at the same time scrupulously just and honest. He was doing well, and would, no doubt, have soon pacified the country to a certain extent if he had not been interfered with by his fossil senior from Khartoum. I do not for one moment wish to say that he would have stemmed or driven back the wave of Mahdism at this time sweeping across the Soudan, but he could have materially retarded its advance and put off the evil day for some time.

Osman Digna, the leader of the fanatical and insurrectionary party, was a well-known Suakim character and a great slave dealer of the Eastern Soudan. He was well known from Darfur and the Bahr el Gazelle provinces to as far as Jeddah and Mecca. Yet he had never travelled, and it was only quite latterly that he had been brought into contact with Europeans, whom he did not like, and, from a native point of view, he had just cause for not doing so. Her Majesty's ship *Wild Swan*, some few years before, had captured between Sheik Barghut and Jeddah a boat of his containing 86 slaves and some merchandise. What with the loss of the slaves and cargo, and the squeezing he got from the officials on both sides of the sea—Turkish and Egyptian—he was reduced to very low circumstances.

He and his family, however, made money again by entering into contracts for senna with the Europeans at Suakim, and also for the supply of fresh water to the cotton factories in the town. In 1881 he had saved enough money to start the slave trade again, and he also got credit from some of the Arab cloth merchants who took part shares in the speculation. With this money and these goods he started for the interior, and on his travels he met the Mahdi, became

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a convert to Mahdism, some say, others say he only joined him from his hatred of the Egyptian Government and of Europeans. There is no doubt that it takes a Soudanese very little time to develop a show of fanaticism, but whether Osman Digna's was due to love for the Mahdi or to a hope of bettering his position there is now no evidence to prove, nor do I think there will be for some time.

One thing is certain, he is no hero. He was never liked by anyone, and, judged by all the dealings I and other Europeans have had with him, we can never say much in his favour nor much against him. He was of a morose and taciturn disposition, and a man one never could take a liking to, as his countenance was forbidding. He is of middle height and thick set, and not nearly such a fine man as his brothers or cousins. His eldest cousin, who died at Tokar some few years back, and was carried from there and buried at Suakim, a thing very seldom done to natives, was a very popular and enlightened man, and had been to Mecca, Medina, Aden, Cairo, and Constantinople. This, for a Soudani, is quite seeing the world. He held the position of Chief of the Chamber of Commerce at Suakim, and was in no ways fanatical. His name was Ali Digna Fagi, and the public are mixing him up with Osman Digna. The latter is not known except to a few Europeans at Suakim, and, as I have said, has never travelled. His brothers Ali and Omer were imprisoned after the capture made by Her Majesty's ship *Wild Swan*. Ali died of fever at Berber some three years ago. He was an enormous man, over six feet five inches in height, and of a particularly good looking and pleasing presence. He wore his hair frizzy fashion, which greatly added to his height.

The road to Tokar is now closed, also those to Cassala

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and Singat. The tribes on the road to Berber round Kokreb are in open revolt, so the Berber road is unsafe, and we have only the northern road open, and the Schiabs who generally pasture their cattle as far north as Durror are avowedly unfriendly to the Government, although they have not as yet joined Osman Digna, and it is to these and the Nourabs only that the few cattle coming in for sale belong.

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CHAPTER II.

SUAKIM SAFE.

After a few days our first reinforcements arrived unexpectedly from Egypt, consisting of part of the gendarmerie from Cairo and Alexandria, under the command, at first, of Colonel Harrington, Majors Giles and Holroyd, and Yusef Bey; and all idea of danger, as we had been so long unattacked, passed away. From the officers we heard that all the gendarmerie under Baker Pasha were to leave Cairo as soon as possible, that he was coming down in command of the force with Sartorius Pasha as second in command, and that Zebehr, the noted slave-hunter, was also to accompany the expedition with a force of blacks, mostly slaves, the sweepings from the chief towns of Egypt.

Colonel Harrington, on his own responsibility, immediately on arrival began getting Gēf into a state of defence, so that a camp might be formed there and the place made impossible to "rush," and easy of defence. The arrival of the English officers roused our two old Egyptian Pashas partly out of the lethargy into which they had fallen, and they at once began to throw obstacles in the way of the English officers doing their work, while a happy thought struck

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Mahomed Taher Pasha that now he lived ashore it would be much safer if the causeway, made by Gordon Pasha to join the island to the main land, were destroyed. He therefore commenced trying to break the beams over the culvert in the centre, but was politely told he would not be permitted to do so, as it was required for moving things across from the island to the mainland. He then subsided, and took no further active part in what was going on, but confined himself to the Government House, and sent his two Aides-de-Camp on errands to the officers, saying he wished to see them.

These two gentlemen got such a nuisance at last, perpetually coming in and out of my house and walking upstairs into my room, that I had to tell them that they must wait down below, and ask permission before they came up. This they did not do, but pushed my servants about. My small black servant, however, was a match for the bigger of the two, and came up to tell me so. He had hardly finished his tale when up came my friend through the private entrance from the yard into the verandah. I was at lunch, and I told him to "impshi" (go away). But he would not, and I was angry, and jumped up from my seat. The gallant warrior, who had run away from the two last engagements, caught his spur in the stairs, and tumbled backwards down the whole flight of steps into the yard. He never came to my house again.

In a few days Colonel Harrington had got his defences marked out: a small earthwork round the Gēf, with a palisade on the top made from the fences round the native huts, and something like a barrier between the outside and inside of the place. It was none too soon that someone had come to put things in order, as the rebels had got large reinforcements,

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and Osman Digna had taken up his quarters at Tamaai, at the further side of Khor Ghob, just opposite to Cassim Effendi's battle-field. His scouts used to come round nightly, and an attack on the town had been arranged. On the night of the expected attack all the Europeans and Greeks went out to a zareba that had been made at the burial-place to the right of the old fort outside the milk market, and we took supper out to the officers who were stationed at that place. As soon as the moon rose we returned. On our way back we found all the Arabs still up, and evidently scared, but as they all said there would be no attack after the moon rose, we went to bed.

One evening when another attack was expected, it was arranged that from eight o'clock H.M.S. *Ranger* should fire shell every quarter of an hour up the Tokar, Tamaai, and Singat roads, so as to show the Arabs that the town was prepared to receive them. The first shell, fired from a 6-ton gun, fell within 300 yards of a body of rebels who were coming down to the attack, and so frightened them, as they had never seen a big shell before in their lives. They could not make out how a shell could have come such a distance, as it was fired with the greatest elevation that the *Ranger* could give it. This first shell was fired towards the Singat road; the next shell along the Tamaai road fell some way to their right. It was quite enough for them, as they went back to Tamaai to have a talk as to what they should do.

The townspeople had been told not to be afraid if they heard the man-of-war firing, as it was only done to frighten the rebels, and soon after the first shot was fired there came a rushing, curious crowd outside my house to see the fun. These townspeople were childish with delight, for they also had never seen any large guns fired, at least, nothing larger

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than a twenty-pounder Armstrong, and of course they had no notion what a big shell was like. After every round there was a chorus of "Ohs!" at the discharge, and another chorus of "Mashallahs!" when the shell exploded miles away in the desert. At the first shot they felt more secure, and by about the sixth round they would have bet their last dollar that Osman Digna and his followers would never come near the town, or try to get inside it, as long as the English were there. The audience was a large and appreciative one, and, after it was over, they all went back to their houses perfectly satisfied and convinced that there was no more cause for fear in the town. Every house-top was crammed with men, women, and children looking on, and they all wanted more, when it was over, of this to them novel sight. When the first shot was fired I happened to be near the causeway, and I never saw such consternation as among some of the inhabitants of Gēf, over which all the shells had to pass; some of the women came running in screaming, and I had to explain to them that there was no danger of the shells hurting them, and that they were being fired for their own good, and presently they went back, perfectly satisfied.

A feeling of more safety is amongst us all; the natives' thanks are profuse, and, if I were not a disbeliever in gratitude, I should say they were showing it without bounds. I believe the townspeople of Suakim have till now not understood the English, and we have now risen a great deal in their estimation. They want to know many things, and why it is the Greeks are so much more numerous than the English, and whether it is likely that the Greek Government will also come or send ships of war to avenge those of their subjects who have been killed.

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A great change in their ideas is going on, and has been since 1882. At one time they thought everything was French, and no doubt France has lost a great deal of her prestige since the time she refused to act in Egypt. The inhabitants now do not mind discussing what is going on in the country, and volunteer as much information as is wanted. There is no doubt that if an English official in Egyptian employ had been here looking out after things a month ago there would not have been the state of confusion there is now, and many of the sheiks who have joined the rebels would have remained to a certain extent neutral. For my part I don't wonder at their joining Osman Digna. His three last successes have in a native point of view made him the talk of the countryside, and, to a superstitious people, these successes seem to have in them something of the Divine or supernatural, and are certainly confirming Osman Digna's preachings that the Egyptians will be delivered into the hands of the Mahdists.

One morning on my return to my house I was surprised to see it occupied by two ladies. I connected their arrival with that of the steamer that came into the harbour, and was immediately introduced to Mrs. and Miss Sartorius, wife and daughter of my old friend General Sartorius Pasha, in the Egyptian service. There was no house at Suakim where they could be comfortably lodged except mine, and that was simply a bachelor's box. I, however, immediately placed it at their disposal, and felt much honoured by their acceptance of the meagre hospitality my roof could afford. They remained under it during their whole stay at Suakim.

Mrs. Sartorius has written a book on her stay at Suakim and the stirring events that took place during the months of December, January, and part of February; and to its

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pages I would refer anyone who wishes for a detailed account of General Valentine Baker's ill-fated expedition.

I should have been but a poor unit of the force, and I was perfectly convinced that I could do better work away from the place. I am not a fighting man, and I don't like war; my sympathies are more with the Soudanese than with the Egyptians, not that I for one moment believe in Mahdism, which is fatal both to European and Egyptian alike. I shall therefore give but a few details of the events at Suakim, and of the part I took in them.

The town is now beginning to look busy. Nearly every day some vessel or other arrives from Suez with reinforcements, and now General Sartorius has arrived. He has taken over command, and things are working in a much more orderly manner. If praise from my pen can give satisfaction to any of the officers that have been slaving night and day since their arrival, they are welcome to it. This I will say, that they had a hard and thankless task to perform, and they all did their duty as only English officers can do it, no matter where or in what country it is in. The material they had to work with was bad, their men had no heart in the work, the Soudan expedition was distasteful to them, as it was to all Egyptians. They were told exaggerated stories of the tribes, and they knew that all their fellow-countrymen and companions of Tel-el-Kebir had already been killed, and their superstition and fatalism was aroused. To send them to the Soudan was a breach of faith, as they had been conscripted or had been led to believe that they would never do service out of Egypt, and there they would have more police than field work to perform; and the nature of the business that they would have to do in Egypt would be to suppress local insurrections, brigandage, and at the utmost

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be called upon in the way of warfare to chastise the wretched Bedouins who surround the Delta. Their native officers, with few exceptions, were worthless. Looking at the men, they were well set up and of fine physique, big and strong enough to go anywhere.

Our house was turned into a mess, and there was no doubt it brought all the English together, and we had a chance twice a day of talking about what was going on. Mrs. Sartorius took all the responsibility of house-keeping off my shoulders, and besides looking after my servants she was her husband's private secretary and copied his dispatches. I am afraid we all used to chaff her unmercifully and say disrespectful things and ask her if she would kindly get the Pasha to do so-and-so, and if she would kindly order the Egyptian Pashas away. She took everything in good part, and was ever busy catering for our wants. We used often to tell her we would find another mess caterer if she could not find better food for us than camel and goat, neither of which, however, appeared at our table, but the mutton and beef were none of the best as a rule.

Cameron, the *Standard* correspondent, used to keep us amused with his tales, and so did many others. Our party, I think, represented the three great divisions of Great Britain, and between us we had been all over the world, and of course had mutual friends everywhere, and it was very curious when someone was yarning to be interrupted by someone else, "Oh, you know So-and-So?" We were a happy family, and the ladies greatly added to our society and kept us all in order.

We were all glad to see Admiral Hewett, the Commander of the Eastern Station, arrive in the flagship H.M.S. *Euryalus*, as he being such a world-famed character we felt

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that England and the English nation had at last awoke to a sense of the serious state of Soudan affairs. I had known Admiral Hewett before, as I had met him in Ceylon when on his way to take command of the China Station. The two flagships of the Eastern and China Stations had met at Galle, and we bachelors there had given a ball at the Oriental Hotel. Admiral Hewett had kindly lent us his band, in place of the old town Burghers who used to play on these occasions. I remember so well taking the band back on board ship at dawn in a most demoralized state, after having promised the Admiral that they should return safely and in a proper condition. They returned safe, and as far as a blue-jacket's idea is concerned, in a "most proper" condition.

The harbour now was gay with shipping and the Suakim people had never seen so many vessels together before, as in Hicks's expedition, which I helped land, there were never more than three steamers in the harbour at a time, and we now have six English men-of-war. The natives were greatly taken with and surprised at the flagship and the number of cannons, machine guns, and the torpedoes, and so many officers and men. There is nothing like a big English man-of-war to instil into a native the idea of England's greatness.

The food question was now becoming a difficult one, and I was asked by General Sartorius if I would lead as guide an expedition to the north to try and procure cattle, and enable him to have a look at the country. I agreed, and one morning we started a little before four o'clock. The Egyptian officers were not ready, and Major Giles and his cavalry went on without them. The leading part of the work devolved upon me. Our force consisted of about 200 cavalry belonging to the Egyptian gendarmerie—a mixed

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lot of Turks and Egyptians—and the rest of the cavalry, and some of the infantry, were to march out about three miles, soon after daylight, to support us if necessary. General Sartorius and I led. I had some fear of the bush, and I did not know what the cavalry was worth. Their commander, Major Giles, was good enough for anything, a smart cavalry officer belonging to the Scinde Horse, and it was a pity that he had not his old regiment with him to give the dervishes a taste of what a good native Indian cavalry regiment was like. I knew the country to the north very well, having shot over it for a long time, although I had never ridden over the road I intended taking them in the dark.

We went out by the northern coast road, keeping on the hard ground and in the open, and after having got about four miles, and the outline of the hills becoming visible, struck westwards towards the two little Handub hills, which were good landmarks. I kept well away from the dense bush that lines the Khor that runs from Hasheem, which is due west of the town, and by daylight we were within four miles of Handub, and could see flocks all the way round the country between Handub and the spur that runs out into the desert and forms Handub valley. We then went on as fast as we could to the wells at Handub. These we found entirely deserted, not a mat hut to be seen, and no traces left of Gordon's rest house, which used to be on the open space above the wells. On going up Handub hill we saw several lots of camels being driven off, and natives on camel back going as hard as they could towards Otoa and Hasheem. The cavalry spread out and drove the country a little to the north seawards. We got three slaves near the wells with a few donkeys, and from them we learnt that the Arabs had

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all left the neighbourhood, as they were frightened both of the Government and Osman Digna, and that the flocks that we saw fed away from the hills during the night, and returned at daybreak so as to be out of danger.

We had about ten minutes' halt only, as we were no doubt in an enemy's country, just long enough to get the animals together that were round the wells, and then turned back towards the sea. The cavalry men drove the camels too fast, and many of them broke back. It was grand fun watching them. The Turks were all in their element over a successful foray and cattle lifting, and they were a great deal more energetic than the Egyptians. I explained to them that once the cattle were started they would make for the wells at which they were accustomed to drink, and that when they saw that they could not return to Handub or Otoa they would make north to Gezirat Abdullah, or to Sharter wells just outside Suakim, and would require very little driving. Some of the camels tried to make north, and it was most amusing seeing them try to head back, and being cut off by the mounted men. I should think we lost by the excited state of the men, and over-riding, and splitting the flocks up, at least as many as we got in. I rode back near the edge of the bush, keeping, however, a fair distance off, so as to be out of danger, and the quantity of game I saw was extraordinary.

I must have seen at least a dozen great bustard, two lots of ariel, and the common gazelle innumerable; hares in hundreds, scared by the cavalry and the flocks, and sand grouse in thousands. When within six miles of Suakim, I rode up to General Sartorius and said I would go in first and give the news. He congratulated me on the raid, and I

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left (as I was of no more use) for Suakim as hard as I could, and got in just as it was getting very hot at about twelve o'clock, meeting outside the town, about a mile off, Mrs. and Miss Sartorius, Brewster Bey, and some others, who had been watching us coming in through the glasses.

They brought out champagne with them, and I must say a soda-water tumbler half-and-half of champagne and soda was most welcome after the hard morning's ride, as we must, with detours after the camels, have done at least 30 miles. There was a little anxiety about us for some time, as two or three riderless horses had found their way into the town from some of the cavalry that had got spills doing cross-country work after the camels, the horses being unaccustomed to a herd of camels charging them, which they did when they were surrounded. It is a pity we did not take out with us some camel men from the town, accustomed to drive camels, as we should have made a much heavier bag.

It is a pretty sight seeing three or four camel men managing a herd of some hundreds of camels. A mounted man, generally on some old female camel, or the stallion camel of the herd, leads the way, and a couple or three men bring up the rear to keep stragglers with the herd. When camels are driven in this manner they go in a compact body, like a flock of sheep on the highway, and the very little ones keep close alongside their dams, making their pretty little grumbling cry, as if they were protesting against being hurried along. There is something very weird in their plaintive way of speaking to their mothers, so different from the horrid and inharmonious noise made by a camel when being loaded. The only method I know of putting a stop to a camel's crying when he is being loaded is to put a handful of sand in his mouth, which generally keeps him quiet for a time, as he

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objects to the sand getting into his back teeth and into his food in the first stomach.

On mustering the animals from our raid we had in round numbers about a thousand head, consisting mostly of milch camels, cows, goats, sheep, and donkeys. Very few of the camels were fitted for transport work, of which the expedition required many, there being very few available in the town. I annexed a cow at once for milk for our mess, and had a sheep sent up to the house as well, and before it had been at my yard half an hour two different natives claimed it as being theirs. Luckily they did not come at the same time, so I had the sheep killed as soon as they went away; and when they returned in the evening at different times they were told by the cook that the sheep had been given back to the other man. Next day they both came again, and I told them that the sheep was dead, and asked how it was that they both claimed it. One said it belonged to his father, and the other to his brother; and I told them that when their relations arrived, and they could prove that it either belonged to one or the other, they should get paid for it. The relations never arrived, and I never paid for the sheep.

I mention this just to show how the two old obstructionist Pashas behaved regarding the raid. Of course, if one poor sheep was claimed the large flock would be, and every camel had many owners. The Pashas demanded that the animals should be given up at once, and damages paid for those that had died, of which there were several from being overdriven. General Sartorius said "No; the owners of the cattle knew that meat, milk, and transport animals were required by the force, and that they would be paid for at a fair and remunerative price. None were forthcoming, so we had to go and get

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them. If the owners will sell, well and good; if they won't they are plunder of war. I shall not hand them back to you, Pashas, but deal with the natives direct through the sheiks to which the tribes belong; all cattle are marked with tribal marks."

From the time the animals were handed back to the tribal representatives our supplies increased immensely, and the natives saw that there was a new era in Soudan customs and dealings of officials, and no backsheesh. The result was that nearly all the sheiks who had not joined Osman Digna came or sent in representatives, and said they would do everything they could to help the Government. Unfortunately this policy was too late, and had it been carried out before there would not have been the large following at Tamaai. Milch camels were given back, so many for one transport camel sold at a remunerative price by the owner; a cow in calf was changed for a bullock for killing purposes at a rate hitherto unheard of. We used to pay 2½d. for 2¾lbs. of fillet of beef before the war; the same with the sheep and goats. The donkeys were given back without any interchange. I date an improvement and a renewed confidence in the Soudan from the time of the arrival of Generals Baker and Sartorius, and Admiral Hewett; and I believe the Soudan could have been saved to the side of law and order had their ideas and those who helped them been carried out.

On Baker Pasha's arrival there was a feeling that the Eastern Soudan could be saved, and if the government was carried on in the new way that all would be well. The tribes still in communication with Suakim were delighted, and even the glad tidings of the new *régime* had spread to the beleaguered garrisons of Tokar and Tamaai, and caused great and heartfelt rejoicings, and the Governors of the

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two places expressed their delight by letter, saying that they had a feeling of more security, and that they could manage to hold out till relief reached them.

I was personally acquainted with Baker Pasha in Egypt, and had, as nearly every Englishman that knew Egypt or had anything to do with the country, cause to remember his hospitality and the interest that he took in his work. Though Baker Pasha did not know the Soudan, he was greatly interested in it on account of what his brother, Sir Samuel Baker, had done; and as far as book experience of it was concerned, I don't suppose he had an equal. I was greatly taken with the pertinent remarks he used to make about my Suakim-Berber railway scheme, and what an advocate he was for its fulfilment! All the influence he had was used on my side to get it through even before Hicks' expedition was thought of, and if it had been sanctioned, and the work commenced, how easy his task would have been compared to what he had to fear now!

I don't suppose that two officials could be found so well suited to each other as the Admiral and General Baker; and if justice is to be done with the material at their command there are no two officials more calculated to get it than the present representatives of Her Majesty and the Viceroy. They worked together in everything, and it was not long before they called in all those who knew the country to help them with their advice. Brewster, the Collector of Customs, was made head of the Intelligence Department at Suakim, and no better man could have been chosen for the post, as he knew the inhabitants of Suakim so intimately, having in his official capacity had dealings with everyone of any standing in the town. Governor-Generals and Governors had been appointed and removed

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with great rapidity since Gordon's time, but Brewster was like Tennyson's Brook, he went on for ever. I had told General Baker and Admiral Hewett that I did not wish to go into the field with the Egyptians, but if my services were required in any other way they were at their disposal. I was told that I might be wanted to go to Massowah, and as there was no Englishman who knew the northern Abyssinian officials as I did, or so much of the Massowah environs, I was very pleased that there was at last a chance that the time I had spent on the frontier on former occasions would be of use to me and to the Government.

I was sent for one afternoon on board the *Euryalus* and told that I was to go to Massowah and find out and report on what was going on, and try to arrange for a quiet settlement of the relations between King John and the Egyptians. Nothing was known for certain of what was going on, but there had been an engagement between the Egyptian Bashi Bazouks and Ras Aloula's soldiers, in which the former had been beaten, and the cry from the Governor at Massowah was "Send me more troops; the town is in danger." Suleiman Pasha Niazi had brought up with him on his return from Massowah an Abyssinian Chief, named Debbub, so as soon as I left the flagship I went to call on this gentleman to find out who he was. He was on my arrival in a delightful state of "fuddle," and the rooms he occupied in the big Caravansen were in a most disgusting condition. One room was festooned round with meat cut in thin strips in rather a high state, with swarms of flies buzzing around. Mr. Debbub immediately offered me absinthe, which he poured out into a tin pot, and seemed hurt on my refusing it.

I found out that he had had to leave his country for his country's good, and had been living a brigand's life on the

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frontier, with his head-quarters at Harkeeko, on Egyptian territory; that he was a first cousin of the King's, and that his father was Ras Areya, the King's uncle, and the Chief that behaved so badly to Gordon Pasha. Mr. Debbub was a great character, and would have me believe that he was a big man in his country. As I did not tell him why I wanted to see him, and that I wanted to write to the English papers about him, he told me perhaps more than he otherwise would have done. On my visit being over I returned to the flagship and was asked by the Admiral when I could get away for Massowah, as the *Ranger* was leaving there next morning at daylight, and I could go by her. I said I would get away by her if she did not leave before eight in the morning, as I had to get my kit ready and all my campaigning things. I went to General Baker after dinner to get my instructions, and I was told I was to have *carte blanche* to find out everything that was going on, and to open communications with Ras Aloula; that I was not to interfere with any of the Government officials, but to report on them to him on his arrival, which would be in about a week's time. He told me that a letter should be given me in the morning to the Governor of Massowah to help me in my inquiries, and that I was to use the telegraph to the interior to find out what was doing in the country, as the rebels had cut the communications between Suakim and Cassala. I said good-bye to General Baker and his staff, and then went home to pack my things and say good-bye to Mrs. and Miss Sartorius and our mess, who had no idea that I was going to leave them.

The state of affairs at Suakim when I left was certainly better for General Baker's presence, and a good many of the northern tribes were coming in and promising help, and

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there was every chance of still being able to put down the rebellion in the Eastern Soudan, as its headquarters were round Eskoweet and in the Tokar Delta only. Not nearly all the Hadendowies had joined it, and only very few of the Amarars. Osman Digna and Mahdism were the strongest local powers, and what no doubt took the eyes of the tribesmen when visiting him more than anything else was the ostentatious display of the plunder that had been taken from the Egyptians in the three fights, and the few Egyptian soldier prisoners at work doing menial labour. No person in the Eastern Soudan had ever been able to do the same before, and it confirmed the tribesmen in their idea of the divine mission of the Mahdi.

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CHAPTER III.

THE EGYPTIANS AT MASSOWAH.

I got away on board H.M.S. *Ranger* at nine o'clock on the 29th December, and arrived at Harat Island, just off the mouth of the Lebka river, the next evening. There we anchored for the night, for it was impossible to make the port of Massowah that day, and steaming at night is dangerous on account of the reefs and the total absence of lights. Harat Island is inhabited by a few fishermen belonging to the Dhalack group. There is water to be procured on the island, but it is not good, and there is also a little stunted vegetation, enough to keep a few sheep and goats alive. The inhabitants know a good deal about the slave trade, and it is a point that dhows from the opposite coast make for when running their cargoes, as they are perfectly free from observation when at the eastern anchorage. There are plenty of turtles to be got in this neighbourhood, also mother-o'-pearl shells, and the fishing is good, a great deal of fish being caught and dried for sale or for home consumption.

Next morning early we arrived at Massowah, and found H.M.S. *Coquette* in the harbour, Captain Crowe immediately coming off and reporting all well and everything quiet in the

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district. Captain Darwall and I after breakfast immediately landed, and called on the Governor, the Collector of Customs, an old friend of mine at Suakim in 1875, and the French Consul. We had a long talk with the Governor, Mouktar Bey, and in a quarter of an hour I measured the gentleman thoroughly, and could see he was one of the class of men that had been sent to the Soudan to be out of harm's way in Egypt. He was very frightened, as there was no knowing what might occur, and the Abysinnians might come down at any moment and attack the place. I asked him if they had ever been known to attack the place before, and he said he was not aware that they had. I pretended to be an utter stranger to the place, and luckily long enough to find out he knew absolutely nothing about his district or what was going on except within the town of Massowah. Unfortunately, the head clerk came in, who knew me, and he welcomed me to Massowah, and then it was all up. After remaining with him about an hour I gave him General Baker's letter, which he put under the pillow of his divan unopened, and we said good-bye. Captain Darwall offered to take a post for him *viâ* Aden, but he had nothing to send. What could such a Governor want in sending letters or telegrams?

We then called on the French Consul, who had a good deal of news to tell, and I informed him why I had come to Massowah and that General Baker and Admiral Hewett would be there soon. He seemed very pleased, and said, "Then you will find the truth very shortly." I was surprised at what the Consul told me as to how things had been mismanaged, and certainly no one but Egyptian officials could have got themselves into such a mess as he described. I then went back and lunched with Captain Darwall, who left for Aden at one o'clock.

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I sent all my things off to an Armenian merchant's, Stephano by name, who set apart for me very nice rooms on the ground floor with a verandah hanging over the sea. I told him I was in want of information, and he gave me a long story of what had taken place, which I scarcely believed could be possible. It was clear I had a nasty task before me, for I saw by the state of affairs that it would be a hard job sifting the information and getting at the truth. I knew that no dependence could be placed on a single official to help me, and so I had to find out from the Europeans and native merchants, from the Consul and the missionaries, what had really happened.

I went back to the Governor as soon as he had returned to his divan. He was most civil, and said he had got rooms in the palace ready for me, that soldiers would take my clothes over for me, and that anything I wanted I had only to ask for. I thanked him, and told him palaces were for Governor-Generals and people of high rank, not for the likes of me; that I was simple in my wants, and preferred quiet when I had work to do. Then I had a long business conversation with him, and I was simply horrified at his ignorance. He had been Governor for over five months, and in that time had left the island twice, once to go to Harkeeko, about four miles off, and have dinner with the officer in charge of the fort, and once to Moncollou to see the waterworks, and had not even visited the fort there; he had received letters and written once or twice to Sankeit, and had no telegrams from Cassala. I asked him if telegrams had arrived from there lately, and he said "Yes," but as they were in cipher and were for the Government at Cairo he did not think it was any good translating them. He had heard of the Mahdi and Hicks' defeat and of Cassim

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Effendi's force that had left Massowah being all killed. He was a regular Allah-Kerim Wallah, a perfect fatalist, and not as much use as an ordinary Bashi Bazouk.

I told him I wanted to see all the Abyssinian correspondence, and he told me Suleiman Pasha Niazi had taken it all away with him, and he did not know what it contained. After about another hour's conversation I told him I was going to the telegraph office to have a talk with Sanheit and Cassala, and get the Governors to meet me in the telegraph office the next morning in order to have a long talk with them. He looked aghast, wondering, I suppose, why I should take so much trouble to find out what people were about.

At the telegraph station I found Selama Bey, the Director of Soudan Telegraphs, a man well known in Egypt and the Soudan. He talked English very well, and wrote it decently, having been a long time in London, where he had received part of his education. I had no difficulty with him after the first ten minutes, but I had foolishly brought no letter with me to the Director of Telegraphs, the Governor being told to aid me. I found Selama Bey no obstructionist, and he immediately gave me every facility, and, for reference sake, I asked him to keep copies of all messages sent, and the tapes on which the messages were received, there being none then in the instruments, and the clerks writing the messages down from ear only.

I sent messages to Sanheit, Amadeeb, Belou, and Cassala, informing the authorities of my arrival, and saying that I wished to know the state of their country, the number of troops they had at each place, and requesting them to send me daily reports of what was going on; and adding that Cassala was to send for Sheik Agheel of the Hamram Arabs

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and Belou station, to get old Sheik Bachseet Bey, chief of the Beni Amer and Khor Barca tribes, to come to the Belou station, so that I could talk to him. Then I went back to the town, and off on board the mail-boat from Aden, that had just come in from Berberah, Zeilah, and Tajurrah. The steamer was full of invalids from the Harar garrison, and without a doctor or medicine, and with only dhurra rations served out to them. They were in a pitiable state. From the officer in charge of the invalids I found the forces in the Somali and Harar districts to consist of—

Zeilah	...	200	black soldiers.				
Berberah	...	175	„	„	105	Bashi Bazouks.	
Tajurrah	...				50	„	„
Harar	...	630	„	„	2,270	„	„ and old Egyptian soldiers, mostly convicts.

I tried to get fresh rations for the invalids, but, as I was not to interfere with the authorities, I could not insist on their supply. The Governor did nothing, and it was not till Suakim was reached that they were properly treated. I never witnessed such cruelty as the Egyptians practice; no wonder the fellaheen do not like being taken for soldiers. Some of the men on board the mail-boat had seen forty years' service, and were treated worse than dogs. I daresay the rations they ought to have received had been made away with.

I ascertained the strength of the Massowah garrison, and despatched the news to General Baker Pasha by the same steamer, and at the same time wrote him privately that I saw not the least fear of any disturbances, that I could not report him fully all details, but that the main cause of disturbances on the frontier was traceable to the officials at Massowah; that I had sent a message to Ras Aloula, saying I had

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arrived, and was looking after the frontier till he, Baker Pasha, arrived, and that I would attend to his messengers and send them back to him the next day.

The Massowah garrison consisted of 1,200 men all told, of which were stationed at

Moncollou, in the fort above the waterworks, 400 black soldiers, 200 Egyptians.
Harkeeko Fort ... ... 100 „
Town Fortifications ... ... 500 „

and about 200 Bashi Bazouks, natives of the country, attached to the police station and to the naïbs, or frontier officers, at Harkeeko and Hotumloo, between the town and Moncollou, ample to keep order, and prevent the town being taken, with the aid of the Egyptian gunboat *Dongola*, that had six 20-pounder Armstrong guns on board. At the outposts near Massowah, there were stationed in Annesky Bay at—

Zullah (the starting point of the English expedition)... ... 100 Egyptians and Bashi Bazouks.
Ariphale ... 180 black soldiers.
And at Hanfilah 50 Bashi Bazouks.

Zullah and Ariphale need not have been held by regulars, as there was no cause for fearing the Abyssinians would come down there, and Bashi Bazouks were better suited for preventing the smuggling of arms than the regulars shut up in small forts, and it was certain that if the Greeks or Europeans wanted to smuggle arms, they would not go to the vicinity of the forts to do so.

The garrison at Sanheit consisted of—

Infantry ... 794 men, all Blacks } Officered by
Artillery ... 115 „ all Egyptians nearly } Egyptians.
Bashi Bazouks 300

The garrison at Amadeeb, 415 men—

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Infantry ... 340 men, all Blacks } Officered by
Artillery ... 75 „ „ „ } Egyptians.

The garrison at Geera—

Infantry ... 160 men, all Blacks } Officered by
Artillery ... 49 „ „ „ } Egyptians.
Bashi Bazouks 99

The garrison at Gallabat—

Infantry ... 300 men, all Blacks.
Artillery ... 64 „ „
Bashi Bazouks 89

No returns of Egyptians, of which there were supposed to be many.

The Cassala garrison was returned to me next morning as :—

Infantry ... 820 men, all Blacks; officered mostly by black officers who had served under Marshal Bazaine in Mexico.
Artillery ... ... 90 men, also Blacks.
Bashi Bazouks and Egyptians... 1,556 men,

or in all a total force of 2,466 men, sufficient to have kept their province in order, and, with the help of the friendly tribes and sheiks, to have taken the offensive at any time.

The telegraph from Cassala to Berber was broken at Gos Redgeb, cutting off our communications with Cairo by wire, so we had to wait for all our news by post from Suez or *viâ* Aden. I got Selama Bey to telegraph to Cassala to his people there to repair the wire at once, and I also telegraphed to the Governor, telling him how angry General Baker would be when he arrived if it were not done, as he would want to telegraph to Cairo; and the Governor promised he would do all he could to get it done. This little bit of wire being broken showed us at last the con-

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necting link between Osman Digna and the Mahdi, and that the Hadendowies at their headquarters at Filik were disaffected, as, do (at least he said he did) what the Governor of Cassala could, he never could get communication with Berber again, and, instead of sending a good force away to chastise the people who pulled the wire down, he only sent mending parties of three or four people, and when the first lot did not come back the others refused to go.

I had great difficulty in getting the Governor to do anything I wanted, for in him I had another example of what sort of officials Egypt is blessed with. The mail-boat with the invalids had space on board for the few cattle the Governor had bought. The *Mehallah*, a very big Khedivial steamer, had been waiting for cattle, and was sent down expressly to bring up as many as she could, for food was scarce in Suakim, and the extra number of beef-eating people made it of the greatest importance that supplies should be plentiful. He would not tranship the animals, and sent both boats away together, so another steamer would have to come from Suakim to bring up supplies. I spoke to him about it, but he would take no notice of me, and the only thing I could do was to tell him, like a small school-boy says, "I'll tell my father what you've done." Mouktar Bey had absolutely sent no one out to tell the cattle owners to bring supplies in, and he had had over a week to do it in.

It took me at least a couple of days to sift evidence, and find out what was going on. At last I wrote a letter to Ras Aloula, and told him I would see that no more trouble took place on the Ailet road, and that if he would revert to what took place before the disturbances, namely, guard all caravans as far as Sahaati, that the Egyptian Bashi Bazouks should

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guard them from there into the town; that inquiries were being made as to his complaints about the robberies, but that I could express no opinion on them, as I did not understand quite what had taken place; and would he, for old friendship sake, let everything stand over till General Baker arrived, and in the meantime allow trade to go on? that I would send him the King's bell, a present from the Viceroy, which had been detained so long, to Ailet as soon as I could, and that to show his friendship he would withdraw all his troops from the Ailet plain to the highlands, so as to clear the neutral belt between the two countries; that as far as Debbub, the King's cousin, was concerned, he was at Suakim, and that I would write to Suakim to have him detained there, and not let him come back to Massowah.

I sent the messengers away with presents, did what I could to show them civility, and took them off on board H.M.S. *Coquette*, where Captain Crowe kindly entertained them, and sent Ras Aloula also some small presents by them. In 72 hours after the messengers left Massowah trade was going on as if there had been no disturbances. The Governor was furious with me, so were a lot more of the officials; the merchants and the Custom House officers were delighted, and I let the Governor know through a third party that if any trouble took place I should report it, and give my opinion as to how the trouble arose.

Now this question was as good as settled, I had to set to work to get hold of as many of Debbub's robbers and followers as I could, and to try and show the gang that in future they would not be allowed to carry on as they had done formerly. I knew Debbub had left behind him one or two men in whom he had great confidence, and if I could get hold of them future work would be easy. I knew that

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if I went to the Chief of the Police I should not get what I wanted, as he would know everything that had gone on, and would effectually prevent my getting information by sending everyone away who had been concerned in the robberies of the caravans.

On one of my afternoon walks I met a one-eyed Shoho native, who salaamed me, and I immediately remembered him as a lad that had been with me shooting on the Ginda plateau, and at Jebel Goddem, when shooting with Captain Berners of H.M.S. *Philomel*. I found him on another occasion looking after some cattle, which he left and joined in with the beaters, and was most useful in showing us game. I sent back the soldier that followed me about everywhere I went—I suppose to report my movements to the Governor—to fetch the Shohoie; he told me he was a thief and a bad man, just the sort of character I wanted; and when I had had a conversation with Mahomed I gave him a dollar, and told him to come to my house before daylight, as I wanted to go shooting. I knew he would have to sleep in the town, as he would not be allowed to pass through the gates at night, and I was certain that I could get a good long talk with him that evening, and that the soldier would think nothing of it, as I told him they had overheard our conversation, that I had known the lad before, and that I wanted him to go shooting with me.

On my return from the *Coquette*, where I had dined, I found Mahomed outside my house, and I immediately had him in; tried if he would drink or smoke. He did neither, a good sign for a frontiersman and a thief. I had a big pot of cocoa made for him, and opened a tin of Huntley and Palmer's sweet biscuits, which he nearly finished, and had a good two hours' yarn with him. He knew nearly every

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little detail of what had taken place, and the story he told me was, I found out afterwards, substantially correct on all points. Debbub had been living at Harkeeko nearly the whole time since he had run away from King John, and used to visit the officials at Massowah about twice a week. He was a connection by marriage also of the head Naib, Mahomed Bey, of Harkeeko.

The only times he was absent from Harkeeko were when he went out on his raiding expeditions. It was he who had robbed the first Abyssinian caravan on Egyptian territory in October, 1882, and again the big caravan, also on Egyptian territory, when an Abyssinian priest was killed in the beginning of September of this year. The two robberies had amounted to over 20,000 dollars. During the two robberies and since the last one Debbub and his followers had been making raids on the cattle of the surrounding tribes, and this was known to everyone outside Massowah and to the officials. From Mahomed's account, then, the Egyptian officials had been harbouring an outlaw of a country with which they were supposed to be at peace, allowing him to rob the caravans of a friendly power, taking no notice of the letters of protest from Ras Aloula, offering no reparation, stopping the King's letters and presents from the Khedive, and, when Ras Aloula threatened to bring down his own caravans guarded by his own soldiers and come and take Debbub if he was not given up, the Egyptians sent Debbub away to Suakim, fortified Sahaati, and despatched a force of Bashi Bazouks out there (which was against the treaty), and when told on several occasions to remove the troops and fortifications took no notice of the letters, but left the small force of about 200 Bashi Bazouks at Sahaati to be defeated by the Abyssinians, and then said

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that King John was making war on them and that they wanted reinforcements.

Anything more insane or childish than the behaviour of the Egyptian officials could not be imagined, and yet all the blame was thrown on King John. The guns and ammunition which Debbub and his followers had were brought into Massowah, as well as their food, and he and all his followers had an asylum granted to them on Egyptian territory. Of course, this behaviour put a stop to trade entirely, and all the merchants were angry; they complained that a small caravan near Sanheit had been robbed by the Abyssinians when on its way to Cassala. This was the first I had heard of it, and it turned out afterwards that the robbery at Sanheit was very much like the one which had taken place near Massowah. I don't know in what country in the world besides the Soudan such a state of things could exist, and where such worthless officials as a rule could be found as the Egyptians. They burn their candles at both ends, kill the geese that lay the golden eggs, and upset the ladder that allows them to climb the tree. In fact, generally it is a case of "up a tree" with them after a short sojourn in this country; they are the strangest and most incomprehensible of people, and one has sometimes to laugh at the things they do just as one has to laugh at a small child when it is a decided pickle.

I managed to bag next morning, thanks to the help of the widow of Franz Hassan Bey, late Governor of Sanheit, four of Debbub's followers, who had come into the town to find out where their leader had gone to. It was a very lucky arrest for me, as they were just leaving the town, having found their game played out; they came along very quietly with Mahomed and me, and as soon as I got them to my

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quarters I told them they were prisoners. I really think they seemed rather pleased than otherwise when I told them that, if they told me the truth, I would protect them and find them employment. I took down what they had to say separately, and then had them locked up in different parts of the town so that they could not communicate with each other; but at this they were not pleased.

When General Baker visited Massowah the town was in great festival in honour of his arrival. The inhabitants were simply delighted, for at last they knew their grievances would be listened to, and that a new era would begin. The only people who were not pleased were some of the officials and the Governor. I went off to see the General, and reported all that I knew. He seemed very glad that I had been able to arrange matters satisfactorily with Ras Aloula, and that there was no cause for alarm. He fully approved all that I had done, and told me how glad he was that he had sent me down to Massowah, as now he had no hesitation in taking away the black troops from Massowah and Sanheit and replacing them by Egyptians. He told me things were improving slightly at Suakim, but that he was very anxious about Tewfik Bey, as until he had fought a successful engagement he did not think he would be able to send him provisions. I asked him if it were not possible to wait until he had got the black troops from Harar, and he said it was only a matter of time if he could wait for the Sanheit troops to arrive, as the Egyptian Government was asking him to act at once.

He could see, after his visit to the telegraph station with me, and receiving messages from the officials on the line, that the country was quiet, and I was greatly amused at the way in which he hurried up old Selama Bey when talking

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to Kusruf Bey, the Governor of Sanheit, and how energetically and with what emphasis the machine was worked. He gave Kusruf Bey a good talking to, and told him to obey my instructions as to sending reports (which he had not done). I went with General Baker all over the forts, and he was perfectly satisfied that, with a few soldiers and some old women, Massowah could not be taken by a native force, nor even surprised as long as there was a guard at the end of the causeway.

I dined with the Governor-General in the evening, and we sat up talking till the small hours of the morning. He asked me if I would take charge for the time being, and I refused, preferring rather to go on in the way I was doing, as I could get out and see the country and what the people wanted, and if I was in charge I should have to be a fixture in the town and its environs. He left behind Iskander Bey, the Colonel of the Alexandria gendarmerie, a capital good fellow, as chief of the town, relieving Mouktar Bey of everything but his civil duties, and on the return of Mason Bey, an American, from the Somali country, where he had been sent on a mission to settle some disputes with the French Government, he was to take charge of Massowah. General Baker had no power to force Mason Bey to take the place, but he was asked to take it as a favour, and if he did so Mouktar Bey was to be sent away at once. I give these details to show what hard work Englishmen have, and how they often have to use every likely person that they meet by chance to fill up a post that becomes vacant by the bad management and dishonesty of its holder, it being impossible to keep him any longer in his position or in the country, as in his turn for revenge he may implicate someone else, and a clean sweep of all the officials would then be required.

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The three Europeans who are still left in the Soudan in important posts were three makeshifts, and, one may say, caught on the spot. Two of them I know pretty well, Emin Bey and Lupton Bey. The latter I got for Gordon, as he wanted a sea-faring man who understood steamers and boats, to look after his Nile flotilla, and from a mate in a small coasting steamer he is now Governor of a country larger than England, which before his arrival was always a source of expenditure and gave absolutely no returns, and is now one of the richest and most paying Provinces in the Soudan. The same may be said of Emin Bey's Province round Lardo, the Naim-Naim country, which is, I believe, now entirely self-supporting. There is no slave trade carried on either in his or Lupton Bey's province, both of which were formerly slave-hunting grounds when the Soudan was governed by Egyptian Pashas.

A great topic at dinner that evening was the future of the country. I told the Pasha that I did not see my way to any improvement until Mahdism and its great ally the slave trade were put down; that I had studied the question from a commercial point of view; that Gordon had educated the natives up to such a point that they wanted trade and commerce developed, which had not been done; that many of the slave-dealers since Gessi's expedition and the detention of Zebehr Pasha had given up slaving, and were, though they had not wholly succeeded, getting another living; and not being helped since Gordon Pasha's departure, they had hailed Mahdism with delight as a means of perhaps upsetting the Egyptian authority, which they detested, and getting back the easier and most remunerative mode of living. The reaction on the tribes, who were doing a large trade with the Europeans, and expected a railway to be built to develop their

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trade, as it had got so congested, would also be against Egyptian rule, and not against Europeans who had nothing to do with taxing them; and that, if anything, they would help to get rid of the Egyptian, hoping the Europeans would come and throw money into the country.

The same could be said about the new cotton industry at Tokar—the trade was European and not Egyptian; both the native and the European had to pay taxes to a ruler they cared nothing for, and who did nothing for them in return for the taxes except to ill-treat them. I advocated a change of front if possible when Osman Digna was conquered, or if not to split the forces and send one expedition to the interior, *viâ* Massowah, Cassala, Gedarif, Gallabat, and Sennaar, under an English General, and the other *viâ* the Suakim-Berber road. The former road was absolutely safe, and supplies could be relied on, and with a friendly neighbour in the shape of Abyssinia, from which any quantity of good fighting men could be drawn by this route, there was no reason to be anxious as to the question of communications, and there was no fear of the mountaineers turning Mahdists, as the higher one goes up the mountains the less the fanaticism, and up till now there were no signs of Mahdism in the neighbourhood.

General Baker had a very good idea of what the Soudan wanted, and if he could get among the tribes he was just the sort of person the country wanted to win them back from Mahdism. The great drawback to his success was want of time to get the material under his command into order, and to show to the tribes that he practised what he preached.

On his departure he gave me *carte blanche* to carry on the inquiries into the robberies, to try and settle everything

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with King John in an amicable manner, and to arrest all robbers I could and send them to Suakim, and enlist as many frontiers men and huntsmen as I could raise and forward them to him to be turned into scouts. He was greatly taken with the frontierman—his agility, his rapid movements, his indifference to fatigue, his mode of fighting, and his precision as a shot. He wanted as many of them as he could get as scouts, and for an irregular force among the mountains above Suakim, to always precede his regular troops.

I said good-bye to General Baker next day, not knowing then what a providential escape he was to have before I next saw him.

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CHAPTER IV.

ON THE NORTHERN FRONTIER.

I WAS busy the next few days in getting on with my robbery inquiry. Mouktar Bey had not been told he was to be dismissed and that Mason Bey was to take charge, but there was no doubt he knew his term of office was likely to be a short one, so he tried to do everything possible to prevent the truth leaking out. The time unemployed with the inquiry, which occupied me five or six hours every day, I spent in getting together scouts for Suakim, and in a week I had about thirty—all of them more or less robbers, but a good proportion of them good hunters, shots, and trackers—men who would not be caught asleep by the enemy, or who would run away without firing a shot. I managed to get from the keeper of the Government archives two letters from Ras Aloula to the Governor of Massowah, of which I give copies, as they are good specimens of the usual official letters from the frontier General. They are very much to the point, and not loaded with many of the very heavy compliments usually employed by the Arabs :—

[TRANSLATION.]

"Ras Aloula, General of the Regular Troops,

"To the Agent of the Government of Massowah.

"How are you? I am, thank God, all right. This son of

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Ras Areya, Debbub, if you do not catch him and send him to me the country will be plundered by him. I shall not let the caravans come down till he is caught. If the farmer does not plough and the merchant does not buy and sell, then nothing prospers and there is no business. Debbub killed a priest and he plundered the property of a Bishop, henceforth what can he do (what crime can he commit) worse than that? Tie him (make him prisoner) and send him to me. You sent me word that you could not find him; he is in Harkeeko or Moncollou. This business (works like these) God does not like. Regarding the business of the son of Tasfor Heilou, the chief of the Gondar and Godjam merchants, he is here, and has about 1,000 loads of ivory, musk, and other things. He has arrived and camped here. If I send him at this moment now perhaps he will be plundered. If you like that I should send them from Ginda I will protect them to that place to Sahaati, and then send up Naib Abdul Rahim, of Moncollou, to take them down.

"Written at Addetchlai.

"(Sealed) RAS ALOULA."

[TRANSLATION.]

"From Ras Aloula

"To the Agent of the Government of Massowah."

"How are you? I am, thank God, all right.

"The reason why I have not sent you the merchants and the caravans is that the other day I have sent to you a letter that I would send you the merchants if you catch and send me Debbub. Now imprison him and send him to me. He is sitting with the family of the Naib of Harkeeko and his children. You yourself also know it.

"Written at Addetchlai.

"(Sealed) RAS ALOULA."

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The priest mentioned in Ras Aloula's first letter was shot and killed nearly immediately by Debbub and his followers when they robbed, nearly half way from Sahaati to Moncollou, a caravan of traders on their way to Massowah. It was a wonder so few people were killed, but when the priest fell I suppose the awful sacrilege, as it was considered by the Abyssinians, so disheartened the others that they all ran away, and did not try to defend their property, which was soon seized. The property was worth over 15,000 dollars, irrespective of the transport animals; many of the merchants had come over two months' march, and had lost their little all. It was a great blow to them—just as they had got their goods within three hours of their destination and under the safe protection, as they imagined, of their priest—to have everything taken from them by their own countrymen on a foreign soil. If General Gordon had been in the Soudan he would have made the officials pay for what he could not get back, and they would all have been told to "imsick Musser" at once. The translation means "take Cairo," or, in other words, "you are dismissed, go to Cairo."

It was a good thing for the officials that General Baker had too much to think of at Suakim to go into the question fully, and that what he wanted was peace at Massowah at any price.

Finding I was so hampered in the town by the officials, I resolved to start on an inspection of the northern frontier and district, to find out myself what was going on and have a parley with the inhabitants. I asked Captain Crowe to come with me and bring another of his officers, and Lieut. Tower and he started with me at daylight one Sunday morning for three or four days' outing. We travelled very light, and only took enough with us to change should we get wet through, which was not very likely.

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On leaving the end of the causeway we took the northern road, and after crossing the nullah, or water-courses, in which the waterworks at Moncollou are situated, went over some stony ground till we arrived on the great northern plain, which is cut up every few miles by nullahs that carry off the heavy rains of the neighbouring hills to the sea. There is a depression in the plain near the village of Amarterie, which is about five miles due north of Massowah. During the rains, vegetables, melons, tobacco, and a little dhurra are grown at Amarterie, but not near so much as at Emberemie, four miles further on. The road north is good so far, and fit for wheeled traffic. The village was nearly deserted, and the few people left there were of the poorest, in fact not worth robbing. Emberemie is a much larger village, and consists of some 250 to 300 huts of good size and neatly built. The village is the burying place of an old sheik who died many years ago, and whose tomb is greatly venerated, and at one time of the year many people visit it and bring offerings to the priest in charge. The whole village is nearly deserted, for not one-tenth of the inhabitants live there. They had gone to the northern hills and into Moncollou, Hotumloo, Harkeeko, and Massowah from fear of the Abyssinians and to get away from the robbers.

For years the inhabitants had not seen a European, and they were at first very shy, but on seeing me dismount from my camel and come up to them they soon came round me. I told them all the news and that Debbub's band of robbers had been broken up, that peace had been made with the Abyssinians, and that they had no cause for fear. In the meantime one had gone off to make coffee, another had gone to bring milk, and they all seemed as pleased as possible with the news I had brought them, and all declared they would bring their friends and flocks back. I

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told them that there was a good market for cattle in Massowah, and that they were, if possible, to send in all the cattle they could spare and that they would get a fair price for them.

I asked them if they had any cause for complaint, and one and all immediately commenced telling me their grievances: they were not protected in any way, they never saw officials or Bashi Bazouks unless they came for taxes, and they had been robbed by the outlaws, so they had not been able to cultivate their land, and more than three-fourths of the acreage was consequently lying idle; the few men who were left ran away when the robbers came or shut themselves up in the tomb for safety. I told them that in future they should be looked after, and enabled to get back all their able men, and if any robbers came that they should catch them and bring them into Massowah; and they said they were not frightened of the Habab robbers, but the Abyssinians. I told them the latter would not come now. They wanted to kill a sheep for me, but I would not allow them to, as I was not an Egyptian official, and I asked permission to see the mosque and tomb, which is really a very well-built and imposing place for this part of the world, and very clean and neatly kept. I gave the guardian a few dollars, and started with their blessings for Wokeero, where a few shepherds lived. Amarterie and Emberemie are important little places, as the inhabitants are mostly shepherds and supply Massowah with the produce of their flocks.

Emberemie, being well out of sight of Massowah harbour, is a noted place for the shipment of slaves to the opposite coast. The trade is not carried on by the inhabitants themselves, but by the Massowah slave dealers and the up-country people, and many a kidnapped Abyssinian child has seen

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the last of Africa at Emberemie. I asked the head man when the last shipment had left, and he said about a month before. He also told me that the Rascheida Arabs, the emigrants from Arabia, had not been to the neighbourhood for a long time, and that their headquarters were at least ten days' march north, and none of them had been down trading at Massowah for a long time.

At Wokeero we remained two nights, and I visited the inhabitants of both Upper and Lower Wokeero. At the latter place, which is near the sea, there are several wells of fairly good water, plenty of trees and shade, and it is a small paradise from an Arab point of view. The whole banks of the river have thick belts of brush on each side, averaging from 50 to 250 or 300 yards in depth in some places. It is a good shooting ground, but dogs and beaters are required to get the pigs out, of which there are many; the only chance to get them in any other way is by still shooting or waiting or employing several natives to watch at intervals of about three-quarters of a mile apart and to come and fetch you as soon as they see any on foot, and then track them. The country between Emberemie and Wokeero is of an open rolling description, with a few belts of timber. There is good grazing ground after the rains, and at all times there is enough tabas or giant grass for camels. The place swarms with game in the shape of hare, dorcas gazelle, and ariel. Of the latter we saw many herds, but could not get near them. We saw several great bustard. At one I got a long shot, about 120 yards, with buck shot, and feathered him. The only chance was one of the pellets hitting him in the head or neck, as at 120 yards the shot would only have bruised his body. At Upper Wokeero the banks are not quite so well wooded, but there are still nice

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shady trees, and a tent is not wanted as the nights are warm, and a tent really is only required in the rains.

The Wokeero is not bad headquarters for small game shooting. Pigs, or the wart-hog, are very common; hyena, jackal, both common; as well as ariel, gazelle-dorcas, and the little dig-dig. Guinea fowl and francolin are also plentiful, and with dogs a large bag might be made. Leopards are by no means rare when the flocks of sheep and goats come down from the hills, and the lion sometimes visits the Wokeero when the cows leave the uplands and food is scarce in the hills. If he visits the Wokeero he has only the banks of the stream to live in, and a sportsman being in Massowah making friends with the shepherds, who would come and give him the news, might often get a chance of one. It is impossible for the lions to cross the waterless desert to the Lebka river, the nearest water north, nor is it likely they would cross the very frequented and waterless desert in the direction of Sahaati, so they must keep to the banks of the river. Hares, also doves of three sorts, are most numerous. Quail, a small partridge, and two or three sorts of sand-grouse I have also seen. The great bustard is also to be met with. Vermin animals are common, and there are myriads of small birds, among which the most curious and amusing is the whydah bird.

Another animal which is also found, but is becoming rare compared to what it was a few years back, is the beisa, or oryx. I would have given anything to have got one, but I had not the time to spare, and had to content myself with seeing three about 500 yards off. How I coveted the horns of the largest one when I saw him go over the sky line! I should have taken a shot at him if I had been off my camel. I heard the oryx had been put on the move by

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some shepherds, or I might have managed a stalk if they had not been disturbed. The surprise of the shepherds at seeing a white man in the desert was amusing, and I think, too, they were frightened at my guide, armed with my single rifle. They did not like coming near me for some time, until I told them I was looking for the inhabitants of the country, and wanted to speak to them. I told them to come to my camp, and have something to eat, at sunset, at the water at the Upper Wokeero, and to bring any of their friends with them. To a couple of them who smoked I gave some cigarettes. I came across two or three robbers' camping-grounds, one on a hill about nine miles north of Wokeero, which had a splendid view all round. At night time they did their cooking a little way down the hill on the northern slope, so that their fires could not be seen from the south. There were seventeen bullock skulls, and I don't know how many goat and sheep heads about the place, plainly showing that there must have been a good number of robbers about.

I had a chase after three men. Two got away, but the third I caught; he was in such a fright, and got his spear ready to throw. He, however, saw by my laughing at him that I did not mean him any harm, and we soon made friends, and then his companions came back. I asked them also to come and see me in the evening, and told them that if they heard shooting not to be frightened, as I had two of my friends at the river who would be shooting birds or pigs or whatever they might see. I asked them what they were doing. They said the day before they had been robbed and beaten by some Habab thieves, and last night the hyenas had broken into their zareba, and that their sheep and goats had run away, and

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they were out looking for them. On my way back I found a goat about five miles out, a most friendly beast; it came up to me, evidently very frightened, and I took it down to the camping place, and tied it up. In the evening when the Arabs came it immediately ran up to them bleating, so there could be no mistake that it belonged to them, and I gave it back.

We had lots of milk brought us, and sheep and goats offered us, but I would only accept two sheep, for which I gave back more than twice their value, and made the natives eat the greater portion of the meat as well, and they all turned into bed happy—or at least tucked themselves up in the sand; their flocks they zarebaed quite close to us. Some thousands of sheep and goats came to drink during the afternoon, and I had a good long talk to their owners, who one and all had the same tale to tell as the Emberemie people—of robbers, no protection, and fear of the Abyssinians, who, however, had never been near them. I told them the same as I told everyone, that there was a new rule, a new Governor-General, and that peace had been made with King John; that as far as the robbers were concerned, as they were so far away from Massowah, they should all join together and catch the robbers, and deal with them in their own fashion; but that if they were frightened of bringing about blood-feuds, if they would only catch them and bring them to Massowah they should be rewarded, and the robbers punished. They seemed perfectly contented with what I told them, and promised to send in cattle to Massowah at once.

We spent three very happy days outside Massowah, and I was quite convinced, from what I saw on my trip, that there was no danger to fear from the northern inhabitants;

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that they never saw an official unless he was tax-hunting, and never got any protection, and that it was on these poor people that the brunt of the misdeeds of the officials fell; that if they were treated kindly they would make good subjects, and that they were willing to sell their surplus animals, bring in their milk and ghee, and buy grain from Massowah, instead of growing it in the way they had to do it now, namely, in every little depression in the desert where water accumulated, which took up so much of their time that they could not look after other things.

I did not get much sport on this trip, as I had no time; my companions saw a great many pigs, some of which they shot at, but they did not get one. They, however, got some francolin and hares, and a dig-dig or two. I saw simply hundreds of ariel when on my rides, but in this peculiar country it is hard to get at them, and the bigger the herd the more pairs of eyes, and the more difficult it is to get near them. Stalking is almost impossible, as there is absolutely no cover north, and the only chance of a shot is by driving, which takes some time to get up. The country north of the Wokeero to the Lebka is very undulating, part of it being a succession of gentle upheavals of the plain, not one of them being over 70 or 80 feet above the level, and the distance between each ridge averages from a mile to half a mile; it does not look at all unlike, and can be compared to, a long swell on the ocean. The only vegetation, with the exception of a few isolated clumps of mimosa, is the tabas grass, which is here not continuous, but grows in isolated tussocks. There is good grazing after the rains, and it used to be in olden days a fine camel-breeding country, but now is only used by the shepherds for their flocks of sheep and goats.

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After a few days' work in Massowah, still keeping the telegraph going and making the officials in the neighbourhood of the telegraph line interchange messages every day, and keeping them interested in news of what was going on, I made another excursion to the south of Massowah, to the Assorta country, the headquarters of the whole robbers of the district. On this occasion I took as a companion the doctor of the *Coquette*.

We started about noon, he on a mule and I on a camel, and we took very few things with us, in order to travel light. After visiting the fort at Harkeeko, we turned into the hills and followed the Agumbessa Valley for about four hours, and the only man who was with us who knew the country was Mahomed, my one-eyed Shohoie. The country, after about two hours' march, became most interesting; the road was up the bed of a water-course, which in this season was nearly dry; at least there was no running water at all, only occasional pools, about six miles from Harkeeko. However, the bed of the Khor is of solid rock, and the water here congregates in pools, which are constantly kept supplied by the water flowing in small streams from the bed of the river, showing that there is always water to be got in the gravelly and sandy bed by digging, and that the supply comes from springs which never dry up in the hot seasons, as at present we are in the dryest month nearly of the year, when there is no certainty of rain.

The road rises rapidly and points towards the high Shoho Mountains, nearly in a line with Halai, which is by far the finest peak of North Abyssinia, and can be seen for miles both land and seawards. The vegetation, as soon as one commences to rise, improves greatly. The umbrella mimosa gets more stunted and the acacia takes its

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place, and here grows to a good large tree. I am sorry that I do not know the names of all the trees that are met with on the frontier, as the vegetation is so unlike that one sees in the tropics. There are many and beautiful sorts of acacias, some of which get to an enormous size and give shade enough for a large flock of sheep or goats, which pass the heat of the day under the branches. They generally pick out the best tree to get under, and resent very often being turned out to make room for noon-day halt. The only drawback to taking their camping grounds is that they are so infested with ticks, which, however, are preferable to scorpions, centipeds, and red ants, and where one is found the others do not generally live.

I picked up a wrinkle from an old Arab on board a pilgrim ship, which I have no hesitation in saying is a first-rate recipe for keeping "crawlers" away. He told me that no insect would pass over camel or goat's hair, and that a thick fringe of either round a carpet will entirely prevent an insect coming on it.

When camping out I always have a fringe put round my carpet, and also round the legs of my camp bed when I use one, which, however, is not very often, and I have found it is a sure protection. The fringe ought to be about four inches broad by about one inch thick. It is good fun watching ants trying to pass a belt of hair round the leg of a table; they get so angry, and give it up, as a rule, after many attempts. Then some other ant, after a short inspection, goes off and fetches some more of his companions and they have a try, and then they give it up. I consider a band of hair better than putting the legs of tables or beds in tins of water, as sometimes the ants manage to swim across; and if anything falls into the tins the ants turn it into a ferry-boat

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and go across, and so get up on the table. I have often amused myself with the black ants in the desert when they are on the march from one of their homes to another by drawing my stick across their path and watching how angry they get and how soon they pass the word on that something is wrong with the road. It takes them at least ten minutes to put the path in order again, and then the continuous stream goes forward and backward in perfect order once more.

Besides the acacia trees, the hegleck, which bears a fruit something like a plum, a little larger than the damson, is also common. The wood of this tree is very hard, and makes good knees for boat building. The nebbuck, another hard wood used for boat building, and which makes good firewood, also abounds. Arab children are fond of the fruit of the nebbuck, which during the season is always to be bought in the bazaars in every Red Sea town. The fruit is brown and about the size of a cherry, the taste insipid. The stones are something like those from our May trees and are sometimes used as beads. The hegleck stone is also used by the dervishes of the Soudan to make their rosaries from, and the string of 99 beads of which the rosary is composed is no mean ornament in their dress, and can be seen from afar. The hegleck is not so handsome a tree as the nebbuck, whose tender green leaves have a most pleasing effect on the eye where verdure is rare. The tamarisk is common, and forms thick belts of vegetation on the banks of the watercourse in many places. Aloes of all sorts, and cacti are in thousands, and if the inhabitants of the country were not so lazy they might get the fibre from the former, which is valuable as a textile.

A Frenchman and a Maltese tried to make an industry

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and gain a living by collecting aloe fibres at Kelamet, on the Massowah-Sanheit road, but it did not succeed, owing to the apathy of the natives and the disturbed state of the country lately; but there is no doubt if things settle down there is a field open for the working of this product, as it can be had in unlimited quantity for the gathering.

Kelamet is a noted place for lions, and there two men when out gathering aloe leaves came across two young lion cubs, not much bigger than a fox terrier dog. They carried them to the house that they had built and zareebaed round at Kelamet, with the intention of taking them to Massowah for sale. The lioness, however, when she came back to look for her cubs, followed up the trail to the zareba, but could not get in. She killed a donkey belonging to the men, frightened the milch goats away, and the people inside the house did all they could to prevent the cubs from crying, and spent a miserable night, frightened out of their lives, as they only had two shot-guns to defend themselves with, and in the morning they let the two cubs go. The cubs went away for two or three hundred yards and were joined by their mother, and the men said they were glad they had escaped so well, as they never passed such a night in their lives and never wanted to do so again.

The only occasion I ever saw a wild lion in my life was at Kelamet. I was asleep, and my servant Ismael, a Mecca Arab, who has travelled a great deal with me, and as far as wild beasts are concerned is always frightened of them, woke me up and said there was a lion quite close. We had three good fires burning, so I knew we were pretty safe, and in about a minute I saw the lion go over the bank of the Khor in which we were encamped. There was a fine moon, but I did not get a shot, being too

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uncertain whether I should hit him in a vital place, and I respect the animal too much to have a rough and tumble fight with a wounded lion at night time. On my journey up to Sanheit my camel-man when out gathering wood for camp fires saw a lion, and we had all to turn out and help get enough wood to keep big fires all night. There was, in fact, hardly a night that we did not hear them, and with my usual luck I was in a hurry, and could not remain there a day or two to get a shot at one.

Monseigneur Touvier, the Catholic Bishop of Sanheit, was passing Kelamet one day when he met a lion in the Khor. The mule he was riding bolted and threw him, and the Bishop says that he held up his crucifix at the lion and it walked away! All the Roman Catholics believe the Bishop's tale, and I don't wish to doubt it for one moment. No doubt there are plenty of lions in this country, but they are hard to get at, and the hyenas and vultures are so numerous that an ox or camel killed one night is finished by the next. So sitting up over a kill is impossible. Indeed, cattle are so plentiful that the lions can always get fresh food. They do a great deal of harm, and a good many shepherds have been killed while defending their cattle, and, if possible, they always get the Abyssinian hunters to kill the lions for them.

We encamped the first night in the Agumbessa Valley at the water holes of Deot. It was just dark when we got to them, and we had to camp out on a bad bit of ground with a few scattered bushes around us. We could find nothing big enough to give us any cover, for it was too dark; still we had supper and tried to make ourselves comfortable. At about ten o'clock it began to rain, and rained on and off nearly the whole night, and a miserable time we had with

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no tent, and only two large tanned bullock skins to cover us. I was glad when morning broke and we could get a fire lighted and some hot cocoa to warm us. The rain was very unusual, as there was no sign of it at sunset, and it was too early in the season for the usual rains, which do not begin till the end of January.

We started off to shoot some francolin, of which there were dozens calling on all sides, and it was not long before the doctor got a shot. We then heard a shot fired about a mile off, followed by two more, and my boy Mahomed immediately was in a fright and said it was Debbub's robbers. Then we heard shouting, and I made Mahomed shout back, and soon some Shohos and Assorta people came up. They said they thought we were robbers, and were pleased to find we were not. The men were very civil, and got us some milk. They told me that the single shot we heard fired was evidently from some of Debbub's people, but there were very few of them about now, as they had gone towards Zullah and up into the Shoho country after kudoo and in search of elephants. Some of them, they said, made use of the road down the Agumbessa Valley to Harkeeko, but since Debbub had left they had broken up as they could not agree about a leader, and had no news from Debbub who he wished would take command.

These men complained bitterly about the Naïbs, who did not do their duty, kept no order, and plundered them whenever they got a chance; and they said that the Naïbs helped Debbub, and were really worse than he was. It was the same old story everywhere: no one looked after the inhabitants, and the officials bullied them. It is a wonder to me that the people of the country stand it as they do. The men I met on the road the day before had the same com-

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plaint, and they all tell the same tale. It must, therefore, be true, as they have not seen each other, and had no news of my coming out to see them, for I dropped on them unawares.

The people have been most kind, giving presents of milk, and offering sheep. If I had taken all the animals offered me at Wokeero and on this trip I should have had a small herd by this time. We amused ourselves by shooting over the hills to the westward towards Henrot and Sahaati, and I did not fire at dig-dig or feather game, as I was told that I might get a chance at a kudoo or a wart hog, a few having been seen about. I did not see a single one, however, but I saw tracks of both. I came across an old camp of Debbub's robbers. It could not be mistaken, as there were several broken absinthe bottles, and I picked up a box of German percussion caps which had been left behind, no doubt a great loss to the owner.

I thoroughly enjoyed my walk; the mountain air was delicious after the rains, and game was on foot all around, and I might have had some pretty francolin shooting. In the evening we slept under some rocks in a khor leading into the road we followed the day before, and had a lovely night and made up for the previous one. Next morning I went out for a walk by myself, and saw some pig, but had no rifle with me, and they were on the move, having been disturbed by shepherds. I then went back to breakfast, and managed to get through a francolin and a lot of other things; and after a good meal started off with two Bashi Bazouks and the doctor to try after pig.

I was walking about 300 yards in front, and saw on ahead four pigs, one big and three half-grown ones, so I went back to the Bashi Bazouk for my rifle, a double-barrelled 10 bore. On taking up the spoor where I saw them, I found they had

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made off for a cave on the side of a hill, and as I could not see them I supposed they had gone into the cave. On approaching its mouth I could hear them, but could not distinctly see anything. At last I saw something move, and foolishly let drive, instead of getting one of the Bashi Bazouks to fire my shot-gun in; out came mother pig first, and I let her have it. The doctor had a shot at one of the small ones and missed. The old sow was too badly hit to charge, and before I could put the other cartridges in she was up and off at a slow pace. I could see her intestines hanging out, and she was, poor creature, far too injured to do any harm. I ran to get a shot at the others, and did not succeed, and by the time I had got back the wounded one had gone. I never would believe that an animal so badly wounded could have gone so far. She took us at least two miles across the hills, for we followed her by the blood tracks, and I came across no less than three pieces of intestines which she must have trod off while running. On looking at her wound I found the bullet had been turned by her ribs, and it had gone clean through from the left side just behind the shoulder and out of her side just in front of her right hind leg; another inch and a half further forward and she must have fallen dead. After a buffalo I think a wart hog takes the most killing, as on several occasions before I have seen them go away with wounds that another animal would have fallen under.

Once at Ginda I put three 500 express bullets through a pig's side all too far back, and it ran fully 300 yards and charged my native twice. I saw Captain Berners of H.M.S. *Philomel* shoot a wart hog near Ariphale in Annesley Bay with two express bullets, smashing liver, kidneys, and lungs, and still the beast went about 400 yards before drop-

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ping. We cut our pig up and went back to Massowah. On our way we shot some francolin, plover, and sand grouse. The doctor did the shooting while I talked to the inhabitants of the country.

I cannot say that I like the Shohoies and Assorta tribes so much as I do the plain-men; indeed, they are by far the worst mountaineers I have ever come across. They are interesting in only one way, that is, in being different from any other tribes. They have got a bad name, and to a certain degree they are all Ishmaels; their hand is against everyone, and everyone's hand is against them. They are said to be treacherous, and the greatest thieves of the Eastern Soudan. Absolutely nothing is known of their country. Very little was ascertained about them in our 1868 expedition, and we seem to have been able to do but little with them. I sent invitations to their sheiks to come to Massowah, but whether they would I doubted, and until they did so I determined not to go into their country, or to make any explorations further than just over the boundary of what may be called Egyptian territory. It would be interesting to go into their country for shooting, as it is said to contain all big game, and I know it is the only place where elephants are found for certain anywhere, near the Red Sea coast. Some of the elephants remain in the Shoho country the whole year round, while others migrate during the rains to the Wolkeit and Basen country.

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CHAPTER V.

ON THE KISM SAMHAR.

On my return to Massowah I found Mason Bey had arrived and taken over charge, and we immediately discussed matters. He thoroughly agreed with what I had done, and left everything on the outside of the town to me; I, of course, having to consult him in everything, and he signing documents.

Mason Bey is a well-known Soudan man, and has had a lot of experience of the Nile Valley tribes, but none of the Eastern Soudan. He has navigated Albert Nyanza, and surveyed a great portion of it, and served under Gordon Pasha for some time. He is an American by birth, and was in the Confederate Navy as Flag-Lieutenant to the Admiral at Richmond. He saw a lot of fighting there. Later he was on the Egyptian Staff under Stone Pasha, and then joined the Cadastre, or Egyptian survey. He was also on the Commission of the Suakim-Berber railway, and was in favour of the Suakim route in preference to that *viâ* the Nile. He had just returned from a mission to the Somali coast, and was now, against his wish, placed at Massowah, but ready to help Baker Pasha to put an end to

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confusion in the Soudan. I had known Mason Bey for many years, and we were great friends, but on some points we did not agree, especially about the Eastern Soudan tribes, whom he considered were more like the Nile tribes, while I did not. I contend that blacks and browns are totally different in every way, and the former, if properly looked after, the better of the two. Mason says the whole population is not worth bothering about, and ought to be left alone, and I chaff him, and say it is all his Southern bringing up; that General Stone said he was a rebel, and if he has such ideas he ought to go back to his wretched mud-coloured fellaheen and superintend the measuring of their feddans, instead of wasting his time over what I consider interesting people, whom his fellaheen cannot govern, and in this last he agrees.

Between us we soon broke up the remnants of all brigandage, and had the frontier in good order. Mason was a man after my heart in the way he put the fear of God into the officials under him; I shall never forget how he used to inspect the Bashi Bazouks and garrison—marching up and down their lines, trying to get some regularity into them. I used to chaff him, and say the only way to get them to look well was to dress them all like himself—tarbush stuck well on the back of his head, stambouli frock-coat, and black continuations—and give them always a cigarette in their mouth. Mason Bey and Gordon Pasha have many points of resemblance in character, and something of the same figure. If his Highness's officials were all like Mason there would not be the state of confusion that generally exists in Egypt, as a more hard-working, conscientious, and upright man than Mason cannot be found, and I believe he is the only American left in the Egyptian service.

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Baker Pasha had ordered Kusruf Bey, the Governor of Sanheit, to send down an Abyssinian outlaw to whom he had given sanctuary with the black regiment when it was relieved by the fellaheen troops. On their arrival at Massowah, one of my men whom I had sent to Sanheit told me the outlaw had been despatched into the Habab country, quite close to Sanheit. Here, then, was another instance of what one had to put up with from Egyptian officials when acting on their own responsibility in the Soudan. Massowah has had its robber in the shape of Debbub, and Sanheit has, I suppose, had the same, only the one at Sanheit has a harder and a less remunerative job in his raids than Debbub had. From what I can learn, the man that Kusruf Bey has taken up with is one Kufla Barrambaras, or frontier guardian of the Dembela district, who has been ill-using his countrymen, and wanted by King John, and had run away to Sanheit, from where he has been looting the Hamasen, and has taken a small caravan of goods belonging to a Greek *en route* to Cassala. From my man I heard that Kufla was daily at the Government house at Sanheit, so the Governor has wilfully disobeyed Baker Pasha's orders by not sending him a prisoner to Massowah.

Mason Bey, on his arrival, confirmed what I had done in imprisoning Naib Abdul Kerim of Harkeeko. This official I had sent out to bring in Debbub's robbers, as he knew them all, and, from some of the robbers that I managed to arrest, I heard that when Naib Abdul Kerim had arrived at their encampment, instead of offering them the terms which he was authorized to, he told them to run away, as the new Christian Pasha wanted to kill them all. It was only by sending out some of the robbers I had arrested that I managed to get more of them in, and enlist them as scouts for General Baker.

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Naïb Abdul Kerim I caught beautifully. He had been ordered, on his return, to come to me at once. Instead of doing so he remained 24 hours at Harkeeko, so that he could get to Massowah on Friday when the divan or Government offices were closed, and he could have a talk with Mouktar Bey, the Governor, before seeing me. He arrived at Mouktar Bey's house, which was quite close to the Palace where I was waiting, just as Mouktar Bey had left for prayers at the island mosque. I saw him come out of Mouktar's house and go to the island, where he immediately inquired where the Governor was and where the Christian dog was, meaning me. My two Bashi Bazouks said that the Christian was waiting for him at the Palace, and that he was to come quickly without praying, as I would not keep him long. The moment he came into the Palace he found me talking to two of the men he had told to run away from Molhohin, the nearest of the robbers' encampments, and I could see by his face that he knew I was aware of what he had been up to.

His first words were excuses. I told him he need not say anything, as he would have to answer for everything to Baker Pasha; that I had my work to do, and that he should not interfere with me again while I was at Massowah, and that I should make his arrest and suspension something to remember. He was then impertinent, and asked me who I was to imprison him, a Naïb. I took him downstairs, locked him up in a big double room on the ground floor, and put two Bashi Bazouks over him with strict orders that he was not to be let out or to see anyone. I then despatched a message to Harkeeko to his house, and told his family they could send him any food and clothes he might want, but move out of the Palace he should not till I had received orders from Suakim.

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I then amused myself by writing a letter to Mouktar Bey, and asked for an answer in writing, which I did not get, but received a visit from the Governor, in which he demanded the man's immediate release. I said I only wanted a letter putting me off duty, and he could then do what he liked. This I did not receive, but during the afternoon had visits from the other Naïbs, asking me what I intended to do with them. I replied, "Have you done anything wrong?" "No, not that we know of." "Then," I said, "do your duty, and you have nothing to fear." The head Naïb, Mahomed Bey (Abdul Kerim's brother), an old friend of mine, then asked that he should take care of his brother, and I told him I did not want for one moment to think he upheld his brother in what he had been doing, and that nothing should shake me in my resolution of keeping his brother under arrest. The old man went away very angry because I would not grant his request.

By nightfall I had enough evidence volunteered to have imprisoned half Massowah. A nice state of affairs had been going on. Slave-dealing, contraband, running arms to the Abyssinians, regular organized bands of outlaws, oppression of the neighbouring tribes, and every roguery under the sun that could only take place under Egyptian or Turkish rule. I took no notice of the small fry as I had secured one big fish, and this was ample to strike terror amongst the rest.

The Naïbs of Massowah date back many centuries, and their importance may be said to have begun with the Turkish occupation. They are the head men of the neighbourhood, and all business between the Turks and frontiersmen was conducted through them. Under Oriental rule a Naïb became a considerable personage, and, of course, their

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conduct depended greatly on how the head of the Government at Massowah behaved. If his rule was venal that of the Naïbs became the same. The system of governing through them had its drawbacks as well as its advantages, but the former predominated. It was suited, perhaps, to the olden times when little was known of the outside tribes, but when these found they could come in and deal with the merchants any intermediary official became needless, and only another source of expense to the trader. Mahomed Bey was the chief of all the Naïbs, and was for many years the only person who had charge of the Abyssinian business. In Harkeeko and Massowah he was a devout Moslem, and when with King John or Ras Aloula he pretended to be a Christian. He had married an Abyssinian wife, the daughter of Chum Argowie, the Governor of Argamie, who is a relation of Ras Areya, and therefore connected with King John.

Naïb Mahomed Bey had been for nearly the whole of the previous year at Cairo trying to get back his former position, which Raschid Pasha, while Governor of the Eastern Soudan, had wisely curtailed, and had not been at Massowah when Debbub's big robbery had taken place. I had a long talk with the old man, and told him it was quite impossible for him to go on with his work, and that I should advise Baker Pasha to pension him and give him a seat in the Government Local Council. He said that was all he wanted; he had served the Government for nearly 50 years, and now not only did he not get his pay regularly, but his power was broken, and after many years faithful service he was thrown on one side like a worn-out shoe, had nothing to live on, and was prevented by rheumatism from joining King John, who had always treated him well.

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He was a fund of information and devoted to the English, having served them honourably on many occasions. I was most willing to listen to his counsels on many minor points, and as he was greatly respected he was a valuable tool to help in the governing of this district.

I always looked upon Gordon Pasha as a master carpenter, and anyone who served under him will heartily endorse what I now say. No one ever turned out better work with the rough tools at his disposal. He had but little choice of servants; the majority of his subordinates would not have been suited to civilized services. He, however, made use of them, and gave the credit to those who did the work, and did not say, as some Governors and officials of my acquaintance, "I have done so-and-so," when often enough had he tried by himself to do what he said he had done he would have failed. Gordon Pasha used to say, "By the help of my hammer, plane, saw, and nails I have made a splendid box," and the tools were pleased.

Mason Bey kept old Naïb Mahomed in order, and sent him to Suakim with a letter to Baker Pasha, and he eventually got his pension. Naïb Abdul Kerim was dismissed, and his power utterly broken, and he retired to live on his plunder and his flocks. The district was divided into two, the Southern and Western and the Northern and North-Western, under two most respectable, and I have every reason to believe, fairly honest Naïbs that used to be under Naïb Abdul Kerim, and the fifth Naïb employed by the Egyptian Government was given the command of the Bashi Bazouks—men recruited from the frontier and local villages—a force which, if properly looked after, was just what was required for the country where bad regulars are useless for bush fighting and mountain work. The district was saved, and

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Mahdism had no chance of taking root or making converts. The same could have been done at Suakim, I am certain, if Tewfik had been left alone in the month of October with the European local influence instead of being hampered by Suleiman Pasha Niazi.

Trade was now going on quite briskly between the Massowah merchants and the Abyssinians. Ivory, gold, coffee, hides, with all sorts of produce, were arriving from the highlands, and everyone was contented. Large caravans of gum were coming in from the Cassala and Taka district, and the camelmen reported everything quiet on the roads and in their districts, and everyone was pleased at the change. News in the Soudan spreads fast, and it was known as far as Sennaar that a change of Governor-Generals had been made, and the majority of the sheiks no doubt thought that it was Sir Samuel Baker who had been appointed and not his brother. Sir Samuel Baker was well known to many of them, and to others by reputation. Sheik Agheel, of the Hamram Arabs, would have come at the head of nearly a thousand horse if he had been paid and his followers fed, and what was now wanted was a European to travel round the frontier districts to see the people and get them to act against Mahdism.

At Massowah there was no difficulty in procuring good fat cattle and transport animals for shipment to Suakim in large quantities, when a month before there was hardly enough for local consumption, and that of the worst description. The sheiks of the surrounding tribes were all coming or sending in messengers, and peace reigned supreme, and the people were once more happy.

Mason Bey sent for me one day and said that there was no more recruiting to be done, that all expenses

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were to be kept down to the very lowest, and that cattle were to be bought only for Suakim, for the Soudan was to be abandoned. For the moment I was dazed, and asked him what it all meant. He said he did not know, nor did the Cairo people either. I have said how quickly news travels in the Soudan. In a few days a perfect sullenness seemed to settle down on the inhabitants as if some awful calamity was about to happen. "What is going to be done?" I was asked, and, of course, could only reply that I did not know. And, indeed, who did? I don't think the people who had spoken the words knew what they had done, or that the world at large understood what that one word "abandonment" meant.

To put it in the plainest possible manner so that a child could understand it, it was simply telling the inhabitants of the Soudan that the Government had given up any further idea of looking after them; that all that had been before was at an end: no more taxes, no more soldiers, no more Pashas, no more security, but absolute freedom to do what you please—that might hereafter was right. No revolution, no change of dynasty or government was ever so sudden, and nothing in the annals of history is to be compared with it. It meant ruin to those who were left up country in the Soudan; it meant ruin to all those who had interests in the Soudan; it meant anarchy, murder, and the cessation of all law and order, and the plunging of the country back again into confusion and chaos, and the instant destruction of years of work that had partly civilized the inhabitants. It is easier to knock things down than to build them up, to destroy than to create. The Soudan mustard seed had grown into a large tree; it only wanted pruning and a little care to become useful and a source of revenue to its owner.

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Now it was laid low. If we have to answer hereafter for what we do in this world, so surely will those who were responsible for preaching abandonment in a loud voice, instead of quietly practising it and recreating as they retired, have to answer for the misery and death of countless thousands.

Lieutenant Graham, Admiral Hewett's flag lieutenant, came down from Suakim *en route* to Abyssinia. He was to see Ras Aloula and arrange a meeting with King John for Admiral Hewett, with the view to making a treaty of peace between Egypt, Abyssinia, and England in 1884—to do at last, in fact, what King John had asked for in 1878. And now the Soudan is being abandoned they are going to settle questions which ought to have been settled years before, and which, being left open, have only been a drain on the Egyptian exchequer! Graham brought down Mouktar Bey's dismissal, and orders for his immediate departure to Massowah, and informed me that I was to go to Abyssinia with the Admiral when he went, at which I was, of course, delighted. He confirmed the news of the abandonment of the Soudan, and of the great trouble Baker Pasha had with his troops, and said that Osman Digna had now a very large following. I really now had but little heart in my work, for I could not see the end of the question, nor what was really going to be done. The only bright spot in the heavy cloud hanging over the Soudan was the speedy departure of the Egyptians from a country in which they were powerless to do any good; but what was to be the cost of the change, and if to be made, could it not have been done in a better manner? It showed but little knowledge of the subject under consideration, and was amateur work at the best.

I saw Graham away on his journey up country, and gave

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him some hints as to Abyssinian travelling, which is easy as long as one does not lose one's temper (which I seldom do). I then proceeded with my robbery inquiry, and went through the archives of the Massowah Government. The revelations were enough to make most people mad, and I could, I think, pick out children in Charity Schools at home who would not have done what the Egyptians had. They had no idea of the geography of the country, and hardly one of the many Pashas or Beys employed there had been outside the town, and not one of them off the beaten track from Massowah to the interior. They knew the men who were responsible for the payment of taxes, but there were no details as to the headquarters of tribes nor the number of fighting men they possessed, nor cattle, nor their pasture lands, nor anything about them with which any ordinary English official would at once make himself familiar.

I knew the same state of affairs existed at Suakim, and that Tewfik Bey was trying to remedy this ignorance. Colonel Stewart had shown me his report on his way to Cairo from Suakim, and although he had information, and his secretary, an Italian, Mesedaglia Bey, had also procured him some, it was not to be relied on. It was full of inaccuracies, as it was gathered from hearsay and from people who knew perhaps little of the subject. Gordon Pasha knew more about the Soudan than any other living man, and still even he was in fault as regards the Eastern Soudan, which requires study and personal visits to the territory of the different tribes before one can be *au fait* with the inhabitants and their wants.

After a few days' work in Massowah, during which time some Abyssinians arrived to take charge of the bell sent by

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the Viceroy to King John, Commander Rolfe of the flagship also unexpectedly arrived from Suakim with messages from the Admiral to Ras Aloula. As I wanted to go to the Ailet Assus district to see what was taking place there, and to study the frontier question a little more, I accompanied Commander Rolfe on part of his journey. We left Massowah together, and arrived at Sahaati at dark. I took one-eyed Mahomed with me, and two Bashi Bazouks, who had taken part in the engagement at Sahaati when Ras Aloula came down and drove the Egyptian force zarebaed there away. One-eyed Mahomed showed us the spot where the Abyssinian priest had been shot, and his place of burial. The spot where he fell had a small cairn of stones over it, to which every passer-by, either Christian or Moslem, adds his stone, offering some few words to God to the effect that the victim may find the pleasures of heaven, and that they may be spared a like death. The grave had been opened by the hyenas, and only a few remnants of cloth were left, so the remains of the poor old priest had not been long in peace.

At Sahaati I looked over the ground where the engagement had taken place, and where the Bashi Bazouks had made a fair stand before they were shot down; the survivors had escaped over rocky ground, and through thick bush, where it would be nearly impossible for civilized troops to have retreated owing to the nature of the ground.

There was hardly a grave intact; nearly all of them had been dug up by the hyenas. The trees round the top water hole amongst the rocks were riddled with bullets, showing that the firing must have been heavy while it lasted. Sahaati is no easy place to defend, as it can be attacked from all sides, and there is hardly any place that can be fortified

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that is not in easy rifle range, while the rocks and big stones afford good cover for the attacking force. The supply of water at Sahaati is inexhaustible. The upper spring is perfectly fresh; the lower ones are all brackish. It is a pretty little place, especially after the rains, and there is an abundance of small game shooting to be had—sand grouse in thousands. Hundreds of the dog-faced monkeys come down to drink about noon-time. I have often amused myself by watching them; the males are very fine with their big manes, and so large as to look like young lions.

There is a small pass at Sahaati which leads up to the higher ridge of ground dividing the lower plain from the Ailet plain. At the top of the small hill the road branches into two, the southern one leading to Sabagumba, and the other taking the more westerly direction to Ailet Assus and Gumhod. We followed the latter, as we were going to halt at Ailet during the day. I wished to see if the bell had gone on. At Sahaati during the night we heard the shepherds making a noise, and *en route* we found a man, who said the lions had been trying to get at their flocks, and they had driven them off.

Soon after leaving this shepherd we came across Lieut. Graham, on his way back to Massowah from Ras Aloula, by whom he had been well received at Addetchlai. While Commander Rolfe and he were talking, I got a pretty right and left shot at a francolin flying across the bed of the Khor, and a little further on shot a guinea-fowl and missed a dig-dig gazelle. We said good-bye to Graham, as he wanted to return to Massowah, for we were not certain whether the mail-boat would leave next day or the day after. We got to Ailet about ten o'clock, and encamped in the open under some big trees, just outside

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the village. We decided to stop there that evening, and go on to Sabagumba and up the pass next morning.

At Ailet we heard that the night before the lions had killed one camel and wounded another. I saw the wounded one, which was very badly mauled, and, I should think, useless for work, as it was quite lame on two legs, one ear nearly pulled off, the throat bitten, and the flank badly torn; and I suggested putting the animal out of his misery, or tying him up, that we might sit up at night and get a shot at the lions, neither of which the Arabs would do, as they said there was a chance of the camel recovering, and it was a valuable one. We determined to sit up over the remains of the one the lions had killed. Our battery was not a formidable one for two persons. I had my double-barrelled 10-bore rifle, a Martini-Henry sporting carbine, and a 12-bore shot-gun, with hardened bullet cartridges; the two latter weapons I lent to Commander Rolfe.

We had a good two-mile walk to the place where the camel was killed, which was on the banks of a small water-course thickly covered by trees. About 300 yards off were some natives' huts, which were well zarebaed, and in the enclosure were about 200 head of cows. We took up our places in some thick bush about twenty yards from the remnants of what was left of the camel, little more than a few bones, and remained very quiet for about two hours, when the young moon going down made shooting impossible, so we went home to our tent at Ailet. That night the lions were not heard, and on my return I found they had had a fresh kill about six miles off. Cattle being so numerous here and in the plains it is very seldom the lion revisits his kill, but in the hills it is nearly a certainty that he returns to his victim, and if he finds it disturbed, or nearly all

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eaten, he goes off after something fresh. The lions among the neighbouring mountains generally kill about five o'clock in the afternoon, then go off to the nearest cover, and return soon after sunset for their evening meal.

There were a great many of them about this year, more than usual, and they have been doing a great deal of damage. I know of one man having been killed, and two or three badly wounded, and a great many cattle have been taken, especially at Gebel Godem, quite close to Massowah.

We were up and away soon after daylight, sending our heavy things *viâ* the direct route to Sabagumba, while we made a detour to visit the hot springs and baths at Ailet, about three miles off. There are two ruins near the hot springs. One of the houses belonged to Walad-el-Michael, the Abyssinian chief of the Hamasen, and Gordon Pasha's *bête noir* for a long time. The other belonged to the Swedish missionaries at Massowah, who used to come here during part of the year. They had another establishment at Mensa, but were obliged, on account of the local disturbances, to withdraw to Moncollou, where they have a first-rate house and establishment, schools, carpenters' shops, smithy, &c. They teach the natives different trades, and do a great deal of good. They have the sympathies of all the inhabitants by the way in which they live, and are always ready to help the poor and give asylum to any Abyssinian Christian that wants an education or to learn a trade. Did the other missionaries follow in the footsteps of these kind people they would not be the nuisance they are, as they have generally managed to get into hot water both with the Egyptians and King John.

The hot springs at Ailet are most curious, and are the only ones anywhere near the Abyssinian high lands. There is

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another hot spring at the end of Annesley Bay, near Ariphale, but it is only active during some seasons. The natives say they can always tell when earthquakes are going to take place by the water at Ailet getting hotter and welling out in a disturbed and irregular manner. Usually there is very little movement in the flow from the cleft from which the water springs; it comes out in a gentle stream with only just a perceptible pulsation. When there is any volcanic disturbance the cleft emits steam, and the hot water rushes out as from a hydrant. It is then too warm to bathe in. At other times the water is so warm that one cannot put one's hand in with comfort. The bed of the stream here may be about twenty yards broad, and the group of springs about twenty, one only of which is hot; the others are about the temperature of ordinary spring-water. Unfortunately, I had no thermometer to take the temperatures. Ailet is famed as a bathing-place, and the natives come from long distances to take a course of these baths, which are said to be good for all skin diseases, rheumatism, and many other complaints.

Only one man and one woman were bathing when we passed. They were both suffering from skin diseases. There is no privacy, and no covering over the springs, and the baths are about seven or eight in number, formed out of the rocky bed of the stream by the natural wearing away of the rock. The bathers go into the water furthest away from the hot spring and gradually move nearer and nearer till they end up with the small pool nearest the spring. This pool may hold at a pinch three or four persons, but I should be sorry to have to go into it with a companion, and the very idea of seeing someone above you doing a course of bathing,

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and knowing that the water that has gone over his body must go over yours, is not inviting.

After leaving the hot springs we struck up a mountain path that leads across a spur of hills and runs out from the main range into the Ailet plain. From the top of the ridge is a very pretty view of the Ailet plain. Sabagumba and the pass can be seen to the right, and the hills then follow along in irregular heights to the Agumbessa hills and plateau rock. Gebel Godem is the furthest highland to be seen. Fronting is the range of hills immediately above Sahaati, with glimpses of the sea and the Dahlack Islands in the distance, and north, or to the left, the country round Assus and Gumhod, and further on, the northern plain and country round Kanfer and the Wokeero, all of which I know.

Guinea-fowl and francolin were calling all round us, and we saw hares and dig-dig gazelles, but no big game, though the footprints of pigs were numerous. Mahomed pointed out the spoor of a male kudoo, which is easily known from that of the hind by the size. After going down hill we entered a very pretty piece of park-like country, with fine forest trees and excellent grazing, which continues close up to the Sabagumba Pass. We met many herds of cattle, as quiet and tame beasts as one could well imagine; they do not seem to mind a European in the least, while the Hadendowie and plain cattle are sometimes most savage. There is the making of splendid beef in this country, and with a little care and feeding during the drought the animals would no doubt improve immensely. There are two sorts of cattle always seen on the plateaux—the long-horned and the short-horned. The latter are by far the prettier of the two, and many of them are like the Channel

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Islands cattle and of about the same size. The milk they give is rich and good, and superior to that of the long-horned.

The long-horned cattle are as a rule the larger of the two, and the bigger boned; they are more irregular in shape and have bigger humps. The horns are most curiously and variously shaped, and some of them of great size. The hides of the beasts are all colours, reds and red and whites predominating.

We found the bell had arrived at Sabagumba all right, and we went up the pass for a short way to immediately under the spot where the big climb commences, and spread our carpets out beside the running water, under the shade of two large tamarind trees. This is a first-rate place for a noon-day camp, and I have had rests here before on six or seven occasions. At night time there are a few mosquitoes, plenty of frogs and different insects, which make it an unpleasant place, and the ground at Sabagumba is always used, which is good the whole year round for man and beast as long as one keeps to the isolated trees in the open. The jungle during the rains is full of the seroot fly, which drive the cattle nearly mad.

We had a pleasant lunch, and did justice to some francolin I had bagged *en route*, and then had a smoke and a talk. I told Commander Rolfe I had never passed a noon-day here without seeing little monkeys coming down to drink, and about five minutes after saying so down about thirty of them came. They are most amusing little things, with long tails, grey coats, white waistcoats, blue sit-me-downs, dark grey heads, and white whiskers. They get very bold if one keeps still, and some of them came within 15 yards of us, gambolling about and swinging from one branch

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to another. One young gentleman made long faces at us and chattered away, evidently asking us what we wanted. A drove of small monkeys is a nice thing to watch, and helps to pass away half-an-hour or so. We also saw two or three hyax, some squirrels, many birds of different sorts, and some beautiful butterflies.

We left for the climb up the pass at about one o'clock. The whole road is in the shade, and the vegetation most interesting. One soon rises into the region of tree mosses, lichens, and orchids, which cover the wild olive and other trees; ferns of all sorts are found growing over the rocks, and the whole flora is entirely different from that of the plains, and, of course, a great deal more varied. The climb up the pass is most difficult, the rocks and boulders being so large, and till the summit is reached two animals cannot go abreast. The mountain side is one dense mass of trees, with thick undergrowth. Road-making would be most expensive, and the pass held by a few good shots would prevent any military force from mounting. It is impossible to use artillery here, nor do I see where it could be placed to cover any attack that might be made. There is no turning the pass or flanking it in any way, and it makes a natural barrier to the highlands. This and the Mahenzie Pass are by far the worst, and the Mahenzie is by far the more difficult of the two, as the last quarter of a mile is nearly straight up and down, not ten yards wide, and the last fifty yards a mule with his packs on nearly touches each side of the wall of rock. There is a chance of the Sabagumba Pass being surprised if the defenders were asleep or seized with a panic; otherwise I do not see how it could be taken, especially as the Abyssinians are now nearly all armed with breechloaders.

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At the top of the pass is a peculiar old tree with five stems, under which M. de Sarzec's servant was taken away by a lion. Messrs. de Sarzec and Raffray, two Frenchmen in the diplomatic service, were on their way on a mission to King John. They had arrived at Sabagumba in the afternoon, and their mules could not take all their baggage up the pass in one trip; so M. Raffray went on up the pass and M. de Sarzec's dog followed him. The dog, a very valuable greyhound, being missed, M. de Sarzec sent his servant up the pass to look for him. Next morning, on the mules returning, he asked the drivers if his servant had arrived, and they said "No." On searching up the pass they found the marks of a lion, and a little further on in the bush the servant's cap and portions of his clothes, showing that the lion had carried the boy off. I had been up and down this pass with M. Raffray, when he was Vice-Consul at Massowah, when he accompanied me on a shooting expedition to Ginda. I always carried my rifle here, for I did not want to end my career in the same way.

The road for the last two miles before Ginda plateau is reached passes also through dense bush at one part. For about 100 yards it is rather open, and one gets a most perfect view of the low country round Massowah and the Red Sea. Massowah on a fine day is just visible, and with a telescope the shipping in the harbour can be made out. There is a perfect view of the mountains and hills below, but the landscape right or left is limited. I chaffed Ras Aloula about it, and asked him if it was his post of observation to see what was going on in Massowah, and with a laugh he said "No;" he got news from Massowah nearly every day whether it was in peace or in war, and that though he could see from there he could not hear.

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We arrived at Ginda at about three, and I did not want to go any further, but Commander Rolfe persuaded me to come on with him, as it would make his journey next day shorter into Asmara. He could not reach Felogobie that night, and the only good camping ground I knew between Ginda and that place was about half way, where a path branched off from the Madaraba Valley to the Asmara plateau, the road running in about half way between Asmara and Sanheit. For this place we made as fast as we could, as it was threatening to rain, and when it does rain in these hills before camp is pitched it generally means a disagreeable night.

The plateau was looking nice and green, and there were several encampments of shepherds dotted about the plain. We here came across some Abyssinian troops coming down after the bell. They had left Asmara that morning, so had already done a fair day's march, and by the time they had got into Sabagumba would have covered over 40 miles, I should think. This is but an ordinary day's march for these men, who never seem to know what fatigue means; they are infinitely worse enemies than the Arabs of the plain, who, although they can go long distances, don't like moving at such a pace. In fighting against these hill-men one never knows what they are going to do, and where they will be from one day to another, and they are just as likely to have cut the communications when one expects them in front waiting to give battle. I cannot say I should like to campaign in Abyssinia with a united country for an enemy. I can see my way into the country, but not out again. It was very lucky that during the 1867-8 expedition the country was divided, for otherwise

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our army would have had a hard job to have got back from Magdala.

We passed under the fine old trees in the Madaraba Valley, past Monkey Rock, and then got to our camping ground by about six. I left the servants to put up our camp, and went up the branch road before named to get something for the pot. The road, after about half-a-mile, opens out with nice glades of grass here and there, every one of which was more or less torn up by pig, of which there must have been swarms in the neighbourhood. However, I did not see one, so on my way back looked out for small game, of which I had seen plenty. As luck would have it, nothing came in my way, and I only got one spur-fowl, a bird a little larger than the francolin, and nearly as good eating. We managed to get supper over without any rain, and then it began to come down steadily, and the Bashi Bazouks, who were sleeping out, had a bad night of it; indeed, I had to get up twice to them to keep them quiet, for they would persist in singing.

Next morning I left Rolfe to continue his journey, and returned to Ginda, where I remained till the afternoon talking to the shepherds. The majority of them were plain-men, and on hearing my news said they would return and drive in their cattle to Massowah for sale. I saw some pig, but could not get a shot at them, and one of my Bashi Bazouks saw a male kudoo crossing from one side of the plain to the other, but I could not find him on the hill, whither he had gone. I, however, got seven guinea-fowl and bought a sheep to take on to Sabagumba, where I arrived just as it was dark. That night was fine, and my men managed to "stow away" the sheep and six of the guinea-fowl, besides rice, and I should not like to say how many gallons of milk.

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All the Bashi Bazouks and my men like coming out with me; they always behave very well and never quarrel with the natives. Of course the food they get is always better than they get at home, and in much greater quantities; consequently to them an outing among the hills is a pleasure. I suppose it is their nearest approach to perfection in this world—lots to eat and drink, plenty of tobacco for those who smoke, and not too fatiguing work; in fact, nothing wanting save their wives.

Some of the Bashi Bazouks, I am afraid, are "sad dogs," and, like Jack, find a wife at every port. I had to give one, Achmed, a talking to. He has a wife at Massowah, another at Moncollou, and in the Agumbessa trip he distinctly told me he had another wife. He also claimed one at Ailet. In the Wokeero trip he behaved himself, as he was out of his district. He is a good fellow, a very handsome, tall, well-made man, always singing and laughing, and always full of energy. He is a good shot, and has killed two guinea-fowl and a francolin with his Remington since he has been out with me, and now longs to show me that he can kill big game. I let him have a shot with my 10-bore rifle at a tree. I did not tell him that it kicked a little, and after firing it and cutting his finger with the trigger-guard, bruising his shoulder and cheek, he said he did not think it was a good gun, but was very strong. On looking at the gun I found he had let off both barrels at once, which accounted for its kicking. I said that the gun never kicked me, and I was not going to tell him it was because he fired both barrels, as I wanted him to think how superior I was to him.

On leaving Sabagumba I managed to get three guinea-fowl, and about a mile further on I dismounted from my

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mule on the edge of the plain, as it is a noted place for pig. I had not got 200 yards out in the plain when I saw three wart-hog feeding about 400 yards off. I sat down behind a tree, and, to my delight, they began feeding towards me. But when within about 120 yards they evidently suspected something wrong, and I found that a breeze had sprung up, and what little there was blew from me to them. I picked out the biggest, and fired at his head, and I saw him fall before I heard the bullet hit. I gave the next biggest another, and heard the ball hit again, but away he went. The first one recovered himself, and began running round in circles, and fell down, so I ran to get a shot at the wounded one, but he was too quick for me, so I sent Achmed after him, and returned to where I had left the other, and to my astonishment found it gone. I soon followed on its track, which pointed for the thick bush, and every fifty yards the beast had tumbled down. I came up to it in about 500 yards, and, to my surprise, it tried to make a sort of drunken charge, but one shot through the side knocked it over, and then it took fully a quarter of an hour to die.

The vitality of these animals is something wonderful. On looking at the wound in the head I found one eye gone and the whole frontal bone smashed to pieces, and I could see the brain, and yet this beast had been able to go such a distance. It was a great deal too badly hurt to charge straight. Had the bullet glanced inwards instead of outwards, after smashing up the eye and bone, death, I should think, would have been instantaneous. I cut off the animal's head, cut it in half through the middle across the spine, and emptied its inside out, so as to make it as light as possible, and sent off a Bashi Bazouk to get a camel, if not, to procure a good donkey, for this heavy load. Achmed in the

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meantime returned, not having been able to catch up with the pig, which, he said, must die, for the blood spoor was very large. He had seen four more pigs, but did not shoot at them. Before getting to the Sahaati side of the Ailet plain I saw two more lots of pig, one of seven and another of three, so between us we had seen 17 pig in about five miles, which will give some idea of their numbers in this district at certain seasons of the year. I got three more guinea-fowl and a francolin, and on leaving the plain shot a dig-dig gazelle, so I had a good bag. I remained at Sahaati till three o'clock, and then went into Massowah the same evening, seeing a few dorcas gazelle, some dig-dig, and many francolin *en route*.

The country round Ailet is very fertile after the rains, and grows good crops of dhurra and duccan, and not bad tobacco. The cultivation entirely depends on the rains and on the quietness of the country. The inhabitants, when the country is disturbed, do not risk sowing, as they have no security for their crops. The soil is good, and very deep, and no doubt might be made into a rather valuable district, and support many more inhabitants than it now does. The agriculture is primitive in the extreme: the ground is not broken up by the plough, but only cleared of weeds, and the grain placed in holes made with a pointed stick, and then covered up; the clearings are surrounded by a zareba made from thorns and the bushes from the clearing; watchers are generally left during the day time to keep cattle from breaking into the crops, and no manual labour is required from the time the seed is planted till the harvest. When the seed is ripe the dhurra fields generally swarm with guinea-fowl, and they are then very easily captured in snares, and one can enjoy very good sport, as the birds get up singly, and not in big

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flocks, as they do in the open. This is the easiest time to get the great bustard, as once marking one down in a patch of dhurra they are easily driven by three or four boys up to the gun, taking, as they do, very little notice of the children of the natives, and the dhurra grows so thickly that the birds cannot see many yards ahead.

The height of the dhurra plant is often ten feet, and grows its grain in tufts, as many as a dozen heads sometimes on one plant, the average, perhaps, about five. The foliage is like the Indian corn, and makes good fodder for all cattle. I remember travelling with a foreigner during crop time and he remarking to me that he did not know grain grew in the desert. As far as my experience goes, grain will grow in a great many places in the Eastern Soudan after the rains. The ground is most fertile, and had it a more equal rainfall it would be a singularly fertile country, as the soil is good. Round all the wells large gardens might be made, but the Soudanese are lazy, and live more on milk and meat than on a vegetable diet; besides, a great drawback is that the Egyptian official taxes all cultivation, and once a man pays taxes he has always to do so, as no excuse of drought is taken. If the country ever falls into the hands of a Government that will give the inhabitants a small premium for every well they open, and every acre they cultivate, it will soon change its aspect. The produce can always be lightly taxed on its entering the towns, which would cover the expense of any premium given, and the natives would be contented by receiving something annually from the Government for their land being in better order, and the cultivator really would pay in the long run as the consumer would give him less money for what he grows. It would be giving with one hand and taking away with the

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other, but the cultivator and owner of the soil would not think so.

I distributed the game on my arrival in Massowah, and the Europeans were all pleased with the pig. The man who brought it in came in at dark, as he did not want to be seen driving a donkey with pig's flesh on it, but he was well chaffed by his brother Moslems; he got in such a rage that he threw the saddle and pushed the donkey into the sea to purify them. When his persecutors had retired, he got the saddle out and hung it up to dry, took his money and a present, and went away next morning contented; the poor donkey looked miserable, as the salt water had got into its ears, and it did nothing but shake its head. The Moslems outside the city in the country are not nearly so fanatical as their town brethren, and they don't mind touching wild pig, and, when they have nothing else to eat, they make a meal of pork. Achmed, my Bashi Bazouk, says Mahomed did not know wild pig, only the town ones, and that wild pig was not unclean, as Mahomed could not have said a thing was unclean that he had not seen, and he had no scruples about eating it outside of Massowah; but he did not like doing it in Massowah as people told him he was an infidel.

We had had no news from Suakim for over a fortnight, so I determined to leave by the incoming mail and call in at Trinkitat to see what was going on there, as we knew Baker Pasha's expedition was to leave there to go to Tokar to fight the rebels in that district, and to reprovision and give ammunition to the garrison.

I had twenty-two more Abyssinian outlaws and frontiersmen to take on, and some few blacks from Sanheit and the surrounding garrisons on the coast, about 100 head of

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cattle for the commissariat and a few mules for the transport. My particular object in going to Suakim was, if possible, to see Baker Pasha, and to get all my kit for the Abyssinian expedition and to tell Admiral Hewett all I knew of the Abyssinian question. Besides, I did not know when the mission was really going to start, but supposed, from all accounts, it was to be some time about the middle of February. I left Massowah and its district perfectly quiet, and no danger was to be apprehended from Cassala; but the Governor was not very active, nor was he getting the sheiks to come in as he ought to have been doing. The abandonment policy was not understood, and it really mattered little to the frontier people, as they were nearly all on good terms with King John and had been much happier before the Egyptian rule than during it. Where it fell so hard on the people interested was in all the low countries and the towns of the interior, and no one could say or dream what would be the end of the question.

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CHAPTER VI.

EGYPTIAN SOLDIERS.

AWAY from Massowah, bound north by the Egyptian mail-boat, having taken the precautions of taking the commander before Mason Bey and getting him written and verbal instructions that he was to go into Trinkitat, as I knew unless I did so he would make some excuse to go past it, as neither he nor his pilot had ever been in there before. Mason made him fetch his chart in, and being an old naval man and navigator he told the commander what to do. I could see that the Egyptian was greatly astonished at Mason Bey, who he had no idea knew one end of a sextant from another, and on leaving the divan with the commander he remarked to me, "The Bey seems to know everything." "Yes," I said, "Americans and English between them know everything that is worth learning; we are not like you that know nothing and leave God and a wretched Arab pilot to take charge of your steamers." Very few of the Egyptian captains know anything of navigation, and go entirely by eye, and steer the most erratic courses.

We arrived off Trinkitat about two o'clock next afternoon, and could not see anything of the expedition, not a ship nor

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a boat, only the remains of a flagstaff on the beach. We got within about three-fourths of a mile of the beach without seeing anything but a lot of rubbish near the seashore, and then we saw some natives coming towards it, who fired a shot or two. I first thought they wanted to communicate, when a bullet went with a "plop" into the water, and then I knew these were not friends who would fire bullets in our direction, so I told the captain not to anchor but to go on to Suakim. At this he seemed pleased, and the English engineer and I put our heads together to consider what the rubbish on the beach could mean. Baker Pasha had evidently been there, and it was clear from the firing that the country was in the hands of the rebels. Still, we did not like to think of a defeat.

The captain wanted to anchor his ship at an island anchorage about 12 miles south of Suakim, and I knew we might fetch the harbour before it got very dark, so I told him the rebels might swim off or come in boats during the night. This was enough for him after his fright at Trinkitat, so he kept on his course, and we arrived off the mouth of Suakim harbour just as it was dark and were met by a steam launch from one of Her Majesty's ships. I knew the lieutenant, and asked him what was up at Trinkitat, and he was surprised that I had not heard the news. "It is all up, old man, with Baker's force; wait till I come on board, and I will tell you all," he said.

The first thing the lieutenant did was to go on the bridge and take command of the steamer coming in, much to the surprise and, I think, delight of the commander; and while he was anchoring her he told me of the awful catastrophe that had taken place, and how the Egyptians had run away and of the cowardly manner in which they had behaved.

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How angry I was with the brutes who prefer being stuck like sheep to fighting for their lives!

I was inexpressibly shocked at the loss of so many of my friends, European and native. One or two of them I had known for many years. Morice Bey, Dr. Leslie, poor Forrester-Walker, who had come down from Egypt and had been living with me at Suakim, were particular friends of mine. Walker had been through a great part of Hicks' campaign, and had been invalided home with dysentery, and had come out to find his death soon after those of his old comrades at Melbeis. He died, I was told, fighting hard at his guns to the last. Leslie, who had also seen service and been through the big wars in Turkey, was killed by the Arabs when he would have been only too glad to help. Morice Bey, at whose house I had often visited at Ramleh, and who I had a great regard for, was also gone, and I should never see him again. I had seen Morice for a few moments before I left for Massowah, and before that, when on the eve of his departure for Ceylon in charge of Arabi Pasha.

Admiral Hewett, I was told, was now in charge at Suakim, having been made Governor-General; an English expedition was expected to relieve the garrisons of Tokar and Singat, and Gordon was going up the Nile most likely as English Commissioner and Governor-General, but what he was to do with the Soudan was unknown. I went straight on board the flagship and reported myself to the Admiral, who immediately asked me to dinner; afterwards I was to tell him everything that was going on at Massowah. I then went off to the ward-room to have a chat and find out more about Baker's fight at El Teb; the details were sickening, and the more I heard the less I liked it.

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We had a charming dinner with the Admiral, and as soon as it was over I had a talk with him for nearly an hour, and he seemed very pleased with the hopeful and good news I brought from Massowah and the frontier.

He again told me I was to accompany him to King John, but that Baker's defeat had very much altered things, and he could not now tell when he would be able to get away. I asked him what I was to do, and if he required my services at Suakim, and he told me to come to the office next morning and he would let me know what I could do.

I then went on shore and called at my house. I found the mess still going on, and Mrs. Sartorius still to the fore and very well, but downhearted at the result of Baker Pasha's defeat. I then went on, although it was ten o'clock, to the headquarters in Géf to see Baker Pasha, whom I found sitting in front of his tent with my old friend Colonel Burnaby, whom I had seen a good many times since his visit to the Soudan in 1874-5.

I had a long and detailed account from General Baker of everything that had taken place, which he volunteered to tell me. He attributed his defeat to the badness of his materials and to his not having had enough time to get his men in order. He thought that he would have done much better if he had gone out with the blacks only, and had not fought in the formation he did, but it was too late to criticize now, and no one knew better than he the material he had to work with. A month, or even less, would have made the difference, but the state of Tokar and Singat forbade him remaining inactive any longer, and the authorities in Egypt were pressing him on to recommence hostilities.

He thanked me very much for what I had done for him

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at Massowah, and said he could not yet tell what was going to be done, but that I was to come to headquarters next day. He said the scouts I had sent him behaved splendidly and had covered the retreat as well as they could, had retired in an orderly manner, stopping to shoot every Arab that had pursued them, and that he wished now that he had brought up all the Bashi Bazouks from Massowah, as they were the best irregulars that could be procured for this sort of fighting and were far superior to the Arabs of the plains. I perfectly agree with Baker Pasha, and I am certain that the only people who can keep the Eastern Soudanese in order are the frontiersmen and those of Massowah. If I ever had a force to command in this country I should prefer the Bashi Bazouks. Leave them to fight in their own way, encumber them with no smart uniforms or boots, have no drill, but insist upon their knowing how to use their rifles at given and unknown distances, and they will succeed.

A good many of the scouts I picked up at Massowah can break their beer bottles at 100 yards, and when a man can do that he is a good enough shot; if he can hit a beer bottle at 100 yards he is good for his man at the same distance. You cannot march in drill formation through the bush or up the passes, and drill is only wanted in the open. The Abyssinian way of skirmishing and attack seems to me to be very good: they generally go in threes, fives, or sevens, with respectively either one, two, or three of the rifles always loaded, so as to cover the men who are loading. When the others say they are loaded the man who is waiting in reserve takes his shot and falls back behind, or the other two advance, whichever the case may be. After saying good-night to General Baker and his

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staff I went off to Brewster Bey's house to sleep, and found a large party. We sat up till the early hours of the morning talking over what had passed since my absence at Massowah.

The defeat of Baker Pasha's force has been told by other pens than mine, and I do not think I can add anything to history or say one word in favour of those who did their best with the materials they had at their disposal. Civilian opinions of soldiering are always worthless to military men. I daresay these are right, and that a civilian has no right to express an opinion on a subject he can know nothing about, and once a man has a military education he is fit for anything, either to command an ironclad or keep a merchant's office. At least I am afraid there are some of these soldiers knocking about the world, and that I have come across them, whereas I have never met a naval man that thought he knew everything.

Therefore the civilian opinion I expressed before and after Tel-el-Kebir was no good, but it has come true, and I am willing to stick to my opinion and shall always maintain it till it is proved I am wrong, namely, that the Egyptian, as a soldier, never can be depended on in the field. He may be drilled into the most perfect machine possible, and be taught to shoot and do a hundred other things, but no one yet has been able to supply the weak spot with the proper stuff; he has not the bowels for fighting, he wants pluck and has no heart in his work. He may do well brigaded with blacks or whites, but when the critical time comes he bolts long before he is beaten. He did so in Abyssinia, he did so in the Soudan, and bolted right merrily at Tel-el-Kebir. It is, to my mind, cruelty to use him as a soldier, and the most that one can expect from him

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is that he will make a fair policeman and a good cultivator. In the latter he excels, and is, therefore, a valuable member of society. He is at home dressed in his brown felt hat and blue galabieh, looking after his beans, wheat, and cotton, and a fish out of water in a red tarbush and white uniform. Behind walls he will prevent the Arabs getting over to cut his throat, and that is about all. While in the open as a rule he is useless. I don't say there are no brave Egyptians, as I have met among them some highly courageous men, but they are in the minority, and it is only wasting time in conscripting the fellaheen and drilling them into tin soldiers. If the army was a volunteer one, and a volunteer one only, I believe good and brave men might be got, and properly led by English officers they would do well and be a credit to their teaching and bringing up; but as long as they are conscripted they are worthless, as the majority of them don't want to fight, and when the pinch comes they are not to be relied on.

With the black it is entirely different. He loves fighting, he loves his uniform, his rifle, his band, and his wife and children, and had these last eighteen months been spent in getting together a black army they could be relied on to fight all the Effendinas battles, and could go anywhere and fight anybody—European, Turk, Soudani, Egyptian, or Abyssinian. Such is my Soudan experience of them, and that of a great many of my friends, civilian and military. I told Sir Evelyn Wood so on my voyage out to the East, and he said he could change all that I complained about. I told him he would not be the first person who had drilled the Egyptians into perfection, as the American officers had done so in 1874, but he could not make them fight.

I saw a good deal of the Ceylon Rifles when in that country,

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and a better set-up lot of men one would think could not be found, but when I saw the Egyptians in 1874 they were a finer lot of men and very smart, and any military man would have said the latter were the best. As far as uniforms, arms, and equipments also were concerned, they had the best. I told the newspaper correspondents this during our chat, and Cameron, of the *Standard*, entirely agreed with me; and it was his opinion after what he had seen of them in Egypt and the Soudan that they were not to be relied on and were most subject to panic. I was glad to hear everyone spoke highly of my thieves and cut-throats from Massowah.

Brewster was most desponding, and looked on the position of affairs in the Eastern Soudan as most critical, and thought that nothing but a miracle could save our poor friend Tewfik Bey. He said ever since abandonment had been talked about the natives outside had nearly all turned Mahdists, and those who had not were friendly to the dervishes and could not be depended upon. No doubt the Mahdi was the rising star; he was the most powerful person in the Soudan, and it was only human nature on the part of the tribes—as they did not know what government would be in the country hereafter, and there was for certain no individual tribe that could stem the torrent of Mahdism—that they should throw in their lot with the strongest party. No one was there to teach them that combination amongst the different sheiks and tribes was the only means of dealing with the fanatical wave now sweeping over the country, and they were all of them now dependent on their own resources, and it was to their good to immediately act on the side of law and order. A policy might have solved the question, but policy there was none, not even one of rescue and retire. And again here I was asked the same

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question as at Massowah: "What does it mean? What is going to be done?" The only answer I could give was: "My dear people, if you don't know, I don't, or anyone else either."

These were busy times, and Admiral Hewett, with the people he could get hold of, had all his work to make arrangements for the coming English expedition, which no one knew much about or of what it would be composed. I was told to make myself generally useful in the Intelligence Department, and look after the scouts outside and the people going out of and coming into Suakim. I had really no departmental work, which pleased me greatly, having to do with the outside people instead of the Egyptians that were now kept entirely within the fortifications.

Baker Pasha gave me one job to do which I did not much relish, as it took considerably over an hour every night, that was, to go round the redoubts from A to H to see whether they were all right. I was a great deal more frightened of being shot by our own friends than speared by the enemy. A redoubt was just to the left of the Tokar road, south; B and C between the Tokar road and the left, or southern water fort, which was D; E was the right or northern water fort; F was again north of E and north-east of the town; G and H were the two north, which, with the outer line of the defences round Géf, made a nearly rectangular figure. I used to take nearly all my Abyssinians with me, and they generally made a noise before coming up to the redoubts, so the men holding them used to challenge. The redoubts could hold about 15 men, and were not easy to get into, and the blacks who held them were quite safe, and generally spent their nights in quiet sleep; the only two redoubts fired at much were the D and E, or left and right water forts. The

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bullets from where the rebels fired could just reach Géf, but not the town.

Colonel Burnaby and I used nearly every morning to take the Abyssinian scouts out for rifle practice, and make them fire about 20 rounds per morning. They were delighted, as they never had such a chance of shooting before, and it was a real treat to them to be able to fire Government ammunition away for nothing. How these men improved, and two or three of them, who had never fired a shot in their lives before, by the end of a week would have hit their man every shot up to 250 yards. I never encouraged them to shoot over 300 yards, as it was quite far enough for the work they were required for.

Colonel Burnaby used to give them prizes and a rupee for every bottle they could break at 100 yards. He found the first morning that he was some dozen rupees out of pocket, so he increased the distance to 150 yards, with a like result. This was so expensive that we both agreed to pay for three prizes to whoever broke the most bottles in 10 shots. It was won one morning by the headman, Tedelar, with five bottles in 10 shots. Before we made the arrangement of only three prizes per day, and when they were getting a rupee per bottle, they brought out on one occasion two great sacks of empties, all of which they said they intended to break that morning. I asked who was going to pay them for it. They said: "Oh, the big Colonel and you have lots of money; you will have to."

The scouts were generally out by daylight, and back by about eight o'clock; from about half-past eight to half-past nine rifle practice. At ten o'clock I used to be about two miles north of the town to bring the shepherds in who had arrived during the night from the north with

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cattle for sale, and take the news from them. Had I not made this arrangement, and let the sheep enter the moment they arrived, there would have been endless disputes and theft by the Egyptian soldiers, who were brave enough when bullying an unarmed native. The shepherds by this means got the same prices for the same quality of cattle, and had one man come in at daylight with two or three good sheep he might have been bid nine or ten dollars a head for them, and would have told the others outside what he got, and they would have stuck out for the same, and meat would have been at famine rates.

The natives were getting about three or four times, in many instances, above the value of their animals, so they could not grumble. With my plan everyone was pleased except the officials—who generally, in olden days, had taken backsheesh—as I got all bazaar dues knocked off. We used generally to see a few of the enemy every morning; sometimes they fired a shot or two at us. I never allowed my scouts to be drawn on, and never followed the enemy into the thick bush; they would not come to us, and I was not going to them.

Colonel Hallam Parr, of the Egyptian Army, who had come from Cairo as Commandant, was chief for the outside work, and I had to report to him, as well as to the Admiral, everything that referred to the scouts. Colonel Parr raised the first lot of Horse Marines I ever saw from the men that had been landed from Her Majesty's ships at Suakim, and he soon got them into good order. After a little they used to go out scouting, and they often went with me as far as Khor Tobain, some five miles north. We used to halt at the water-melon beds, dismount and have a water-melon or two, and bring in as many as we could; they were greatly prized by

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those inside the fortifications, as there were none left anywhere near Suakim, having been all stolen by the Egyptian soldiers.

One day I made a raid on the gardens belonging to the rebels, about seven miles north, and found plenty of good melons, which we took away; the others we destroyed. On coming back I saw a good many rebels towards Hasheem, and from the flagship in the harbour they thought we should be cut off. I knew every inch of the ground, and I was trying to tempt the Arabs to try and carry out the manœuvre of attempting to cut us off, as we could easily have got well within range of the men-of-war long before they could reach us, and they only had about twenty men on dromedaries. We could have shot all the mounted men down long before they could have done us any harm. A lieutenant from the *Euryalus* came galloping out to tell me of the Arabs, and as it was getting late I came back, much to the disgust of my Abyssinians, who were dying to have a turn at the Arabs. I had to speak two or three times before I could get them away.

Another morning I was out about three miles and I saw two Europeans about a mile and a half off towards the sea beach and about in a line with me. I had not been told of any permits having been given for shooting, nor had I given any myself, and it was strictly forbidden to go out further than about 3,000 yards without an escort, so I sent my scouts after the people as a sort of guard, as had they permission I did not mind, for it was none of my business if they liked to walk into the hands of the Mahdists. I rode slowly off in another direction after some shepherds driving in cattle from the Handub direction: a new route, so late in the day, as it showed that either Handub was free from rebels or keeping a very bad look-out. I heard that there was no one round

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Handub, but the men had not been to the wells, so they could not say if they were deserted.

Before I had done speaking to them my attention was called to the scouts I had sent away after the Europeans near the sea beach; the latter were running as fast as they could back towards the shipping, followed by the scouts, who were gaining on them rapidly. The chase must have lasted for about two and a half miles; one European had got a good 200 yards ahead of the other, and the last one I could see was dead beat. When my men got within 300 yards of the nearest they gave up and returned. I could hardly sit on my horse for laughing, as I took the whole thing as a joke, though I daresay those being chased did not consider it so. On the corporal of the scouts coming up he presented me with a French straw hat, and I immediately knew that they had been chasing French naval officers and that I should hear something more about it. I immediately sent the corporal back to put the hat down where he had found it, as I considered it might be a troublesome trophy to show in Suakim.

On bearing to the Admiral my daily report he asked me the circumstances of the case, and I told him. He seemed delighted at the joke, as he said he had had a visit that morning from the senior naval officer of the French ships, who had said that two of his officers had been out shooting to the north and had come across a large band of rebels, who had chased them to within a mile of the ships, and that they had providentially escaped. It was a hot morning, and I must say I should not have liked the two and a half miles' run. The French officers' feelings can well be imagined.

Nothing was said about it at the time in the town as the Admiral did not want the other foreign men-of-war (Italians

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and Russians) to know anything about it, as there might have been something disagreeable said, but after the French men-of-war left we had many a laugh over it, and the Commander of an Italian gun-boat, who had seen the French officers arrive after their run, was delighted, and when he found there was not the danger suspected, he went out shooting with my scouts on one or two occasions.

If anyone really wanted to see what Egyptians are like when they have a chance of going back to their country from the Soudan, they should have seen Baker Pasha's force embark for Cairo. I never saw anything like it. Not a vestige of discipline, the transports crowded till it was impossible to move on deck or below. The lighters and boats taking the troops off from the shore nearly capsized, they were so overladen; the men, no matter to what branch of the service they belonged, all flocked on board. An Egyptian soldier with his rifle and arms would come down to the beach, ask which ship was going to Suez, and as soon as he was told, away would go the rifle one way, belt and bayonet another, and often enough he would jump into the sea and swim off to the steamer, climb up a rope or the anchor chain, and get helped on board by his fellow-countrymen. I saw one transport go away with soldiers swarming up the side while the vessel was under weigh. A lighter with some cavalry men nearly fouled the stern, and one of them jumped on to the anchor and was brought up with it to the hawse pipe. As he found his sword in the way he undid his belt and let it drop into the sea.

For several days the soldiers in the town were in open mutiny; they would not drill, work, man the fortifications, or do anything; the worst of all were Zebehr's blacks, who had no discipline, and they did more to contaminate the

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Egyptians than anything else. They were going about the town with their rifles very often loaded, sometimes with their bayonets fixed; they got drunk, stole everything they could lay their hands on, and behaved in a disgraceful manner. The officers, if anything, were worse than the men, and one day we had to close the Custom House gate that led into the Government Yard to prevent the soldiers from taking possession. The blacks hustled me going along the street to Government House, an Egyptian caught hold of my shoulder, and a black officer cursed me as a Christian dog.

I reached the small open wicket gate at the Custom House, and, as they tried to push in, I told them to stand back, which they did. I let the noisiest man, who had hustled me, have it on the nose, jumped through the gate, and closed the door behind me, and all the other blacks began laughing at him. They are really children, and on my coming away from Government House the man I had struck came up to me and, as he was quiet, I heard what he had to say. He was a Bongo black, and I told him to go to my small black servant, of the same tribe as his own, and he afterwards remained behind in Suakim and became a useful servant. He told me he had been seized in Cairo when Zebehr's blacks were got together, and he did not know what to do, as his master was in Cairo and he did not want to return to him.

One afternoon the Egyptian soldiers were very nearly breaking open the gaol in which Seyed Kandil, of Alexandria massacre renown, was shut up, and they were making such a disturbance in the town, fraternizing with the prisoners and convicts, that we had to take precautions. I got the Abyssinian scouts under arms and as many of the local police as I could trust, and luckily Major Giles had the

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majority of his cavalry, especially the Turks, still in good order.

We went to the gaol and soon managed to get the prisoners under lock and key. The soldiers, seeing force would be used if necessary, kept quiet. I had to report on the prisoners, and a nice set of villains they were. Seyed Kandil, instead of working, was living in luxury with a cook and two slaves to look after him. His clothes were of the best he had—silk dressing gown and other little luxuries. I made a night call at eleven o'clock and found the prisoners playing cards, drinking coffee and forbidden liquor in the shape of mastics and Soudan brandy; in fact, enjoying themselves thoroughly. I was told by the head of the gaol that all the prisoners he had ever had under *him* were accustomed to amuse themselves in this way, and he did not see, as long as they kept quiet and did not try to run away, why they should be interfered with.

The short time I had to do with the gaol I altered things a good deal, and was looked upon as cruel for ordering all lights out at eight and all doors locked just at the time when they were accustomed to begin their pranks.

It was very amusing disarming the soldiers when they went away. They seemed delighted to get rid of everything in the shape of military accoutrements, and needed no pressing. They just threw everything down in heaps and went on their way rejoicing. The majority of the Remingtons had not been cleaned for days; some had unexploded cartridges in them, others had a cartridge jammed in the breech, and many of the muzzles were blocked with mud and dirt. In the magazine there were boxes of Remington rifles that had never been looked at since they had left Cairo, and ammunition dating back from the Egypto-Abyssinian war.

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All the new ammunition was nearest the door, and the further one moved the boxes from the front the older it became. There were several kegs and boxes of powder in different stages of dilapidation, and it was a mercy that no explosion had occurred. The door used to be generally wide open, and the storekeeper had his fire for cooking purposes within three yards of it and seven or eight of the gunpowder.

I found many ancient guns and swords among the rubbish, which were quite useless, and could these weapons have told a tale it would no doubt have been a curious one. How the old iron cannon of George I.'s time got to Suakim must have also been strange. It most likely came with the Turks, perhaps from Jeddah, or *viâ* Bagdad and the Persian Gulf; it has now been turned into a mooring post in the harbour, and is a great deal more useful than ever it was before.

When the most ragged of the soldiers had gone off there was great discontent among the rest, who refused even to work, and wanted to go back to Egypt as well. They were told by the Admiral that they would be made to work. But they stoutly refused. They were told that they would be flogged, and they still declined. So four companies of them were marched up to the Custom House yard, where they found a squad of marines formed up, with fixed bayonets. A big four-wheeled Commissariat cart was brought up; to the hind wheel of this they were tied, and four of the Egyptian boatswains were told off to flog them with English cat-o'-nine-tails.

I shall never forget the look of surprise of these soldiers when they were told that, if they did not work, they should all be flogged. About 30 of them got 20 cuts each. Whether it was the different way of being beaten to which they had

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been accustomed, or whether the standing up position made it more painful than the stretched full length position on the ground, I cannot tell, but nearly all of them cried for mercy after the first few cuts. Long before it came to a man's turn to be beaten he was crying, and I think the nearer they were to the end of the line the more frightened they were.

It was almost ludicrous to see their faces. What different studies they made! After about thirty were beaten they all agreed to work, and were marched back to their camp. Those who had not been beaten had smiles on their faces, and chaffed the others who had; and those who escaped expressed their delight at not being the right-hand men of the Company, and that God had put them in the right place. The officer who had got up the mutiny was in a terrible fright. He had looked on the whole time, and after it was over was put into the guard-room, and told his turn would come next morning. He expected to be shot, and when he went up to the Admiral next morning his face was livid. He was dismissed the service, at which he was pleased, and was sent to Cairo, which made him happier still.

Just to show how another department was managed, on my rounds one night I called at the hospital at Géf, where there were several wounded men and two or three bad fever cases. It was a rainy night, yet the windows and doors were wide open, no lamp was alight, and not a soul was looking after the patients, who were nearly all wet through, sitting up in their beds. It was not my place to do anything further than report, but I took on myself the responsibility of seeing the inmates of the hospital made comfortable for the night. The Egyptian doctor caught it next day from the Admiral, who put Dr. Galbraith, of the Telegraph steamer *Chiltern*, in command of everything concerning the Medical Department,

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as the Egyptian surgeons were not to be relied on; and from the day he took over a great change was made in the comfort of the patients.

One could fill volumes with anecdotes of what took place among the Egyptian officials and officers. One more example, and I will have done with them. It is believed by some Egyptians that there are Soudan natives who can change themselves when they like into animals, and some of the officers wrote a letter to General Sartorius to say that a rebel native outside had turned himself into a camel, and spied upon everything going on, and that every evening this camel came into the town from the wells, got all the information it could at night, and then went out to the rebels in the daytime and told them all. They wanted the camel imprisoned, but not killed, as God would bring about another calamity if it was hurt. If it were kept out of the town it, or whatever was inside, would only take another form—a goat, or sheep, or perhaps a hyena, and still find out what was going on.

The document was no hoax, but drawn up in official form, and signed by five officers, who thoroughly believed what they wrote. A nice lot of officers to command troops, these gentlemen, to keep the Soudanese in order! I had heard Egyptians several times tell the same tale, and I once travelled from Berber to Suakim with an old Syrian Arab who believed that men took the form of hyenas, lions, or other carnivorous animals, just to satisfy their longing for human flesh, which they were ashamed to eat as long as they retained the shape of a man. So this was no surprise.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE HORRORS OF WAR.

As soon as we got the submarine telegraph to Suakim plenty of news came in from the outside world, and we were all delighted to again get a chance of rapid communication. Before the Eastern Soudan disturbances commenced we were supposed to be joined up by wire with Cairo, but the time of transit of a message could never be depended on. Either a camel had broken the wire, having caught it with his load and snapped it, or the white ants had eaten the telegraph poles, or there was some accident or other. On several occasions I have received telegrams from Suez to say a steamer was leaving, and she had arrived and gone before the message was delivered. The messages before were always sent in Arabic, and they invariably got mutilated. The majority of the officials believed that the instruments could only talk Arabic, and I had a long argument with one old fossil of an Egyptian before he believed that it could talk any language, and then he was only satisfied when the telegraphist said it was a fact.

We heard all about Gordon's mission to Khartoum with Colonel Stewart, and both Brewster and I could not understand what he was really intended to do. We were both in

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hopes that he would have come *viâ* Suakim, as he would have done a great deal of good if he had, and perhaps have set things to rights; anyhow, if he could not have got through direct from Suakim he could have *viâ* Massowah, and then gone on to Cassala, and taken on all the friendly sheiks with him, which would have given him a great deal more power, as he could have explained the abandonment to them, and have got them to act in concert together. Any route we both thought would have been preferable to that *viâ* Korosko and Abou Hommed, as he missed out all the Dongola province, and the tribes between there and where the Mahdi was at Obid. It only gave him the Berber people and those between there and Khartoum to see, as all chiefs and sheiks who wanted to see him personally would have to leave their districts at a critical time, and make their way to Khartoum. Then, again, if the Soudan were to be abandoned Khartoum would no longer be the seat of government, and Berber would become the most important, both commercially and strategically, as it was nearer the sea coast, nearer Dongola, and, as long as high Nile lasted, was easier of defence than Khartoum, although at low Nile the latter was the better of the two. It also left the Sennaar province neglected, and it sadly wanted help, and to arrange with the sheiks there for grain supplies for Khartoum was of great importance. Many of Gordon's staunchest supporters were in this district, and the inhabitants have more trading propensities than the majority of the other Soudan tribes. He would have had the Shukeriah, the great Soudan carriers, with him, with whom he could have arranged for transport, either from the Taka province to Khartoum, or to the coast, whichever was required. The tribes would have followed Gordon to Khartoum when they would hesitate in leaving

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their districts for that place. What I want understood is, that they would not have refused to accompany him, but they would not leave their own districts to visit him at Khartoum. My experience of the Soudanese is, that by a personal interview you can get them to do many things which you would not by sending messengers or writing letters. We heard full accounts by wire of the strength of the expedition, and of the officers in command, and it seemed to me that I should meet many friends that I had no idea of ever seeing in Suakim. If this expedition had been started when it ought to have been, namely, in December, 1883, instead of in February, 1884, there would not have been the ghastly butcher's bill and the onus of the lives of thousands of human creatures at some people's doors.

Poor Tewfik Bey! Never was a good and brave man more recklessly sacrificed than he. His defence of Singat was most heroic; he stood at bay to the very last, and would not sally out till everything was lost, and everything that would sustain life was exhausted, holding on to his post and driving off his assailants every time they attacked; not only driving them off, but on every occasion sallying out after his enemies and inflicting severe losses on them, and every time returning to the post he was told not to leave, panting and exhausted, but with still unabated pluck, to see on each return a weaker and more emaciated population under his charge; the children, poor little things, not complaining like English ones do when starved, but getting gradually weaker; the women weeping and lamenting for the dead who are past suffering, and, doubtless, happier than those left, who were dying by inches, and had really no choice of death but starvation or that of the sword.

When every cat, dog, rat, or four-footed animal was gone

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meals were made off chance crows or vultures that perhaps were only waiting for their turn to enjoy a repast of human flesh. Straps, boots, the hides off the native augarebs, or bedsteads, bones were all boiled down to prolong life, which is, no doubt, as sweet to a native as to a European; and then when insects and the leaves of trees were consumed and starvation pitch was reached, and the promised help did not come, Tewfik decided, after holding a council of war with those who had so gallantly shared with him the defence of Singat, to march out and fight rather than to be butchered in cold blood, or actually succumb from starvation.

He made all his plans during the night, he destroyed his defences, spiked his guns, for his men were too weak to work them, and threw them down the wells, which were filled up with the *débris* of the stone buildings; everything of use to the dervishes he destroyed, and then he marched out of Singat. In all about 700 souls left that place, he and his troop leading, the women and children bringing up the rear. A little over a mile from where he started he met the rebels. The engagement commenced; but it was not till the latter had recourse to reinforcements that the brave defenders of the station were overpowered and massacred to a man. There were many women and children among the slain. The survivors were made prisoners, the women became the concubines of the dervishes, the children were left to find their way to Jeddah and Mecca to be sold into slavery.

Tewfik fell, as he always said he would, fighting rather than die like a rat in a hole. The natives say that he fought splendidly, and that as soon as he fell he was hacked to pieces, his liver torn out and eaten so as to give those that partook of it strength in the time of war and render them as brave as he. In the annals of the Soudan there never

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has been a more perfect hero than Tewfik Bey, and his memory will last and be told on the hill side and at camp fire among the Soudan warriors long after the present generation has passed away. I shall never forget the piercing screams of the women in Suakim when the news arrived of the massacre of the Singat garrison; the majority of the men that had fallen were townspeople, and belonged to the local Bashi Bazouks. There was hardly a family in the place that had not lost a relative, and all of them had lost friends. Tewfik had asked me for a loan of one of my rifles, a sporting Martini-Henry, and I had sent it to him at Singat with 500 rounds of ammunition. He sent me a message before I went to Massowah to say he had killed a good many people with it. He was a good shot, and fond of sport. I have now lost a sporting Martini, not that I mind losing weapons in the cause, and my four revolvers—two with Moncrieff, and one each with my servants, who were both killed on their way to Tokar, one with Moncrieff, the other with Baker Pasha. My servants were two hard-working, good fellows, and cannot, like the revolvers, be replaced. They were both thoroughly up in the Tokar trade, cotton planting and produce cleaning, and it will be a long time before I can get others like them.

Not long after the fall of Singat news came in that the Tokar garrison was arranging to capitulate, and before General Graham had arrived we heard that it had fallen and the garrison and inhabitants had been spared. There was no reason why Tokar should have capitulated; it could have held out for a long time, as there was no question of starvation, for natives can live and thrive a long time upon dhurra, of which they had enough to last for another three months, and of ammunition they had a good deal left. The real truth was that they had no leader like Tewfik Bey, and

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that the majority of the garrison were Egyptian convicts and old soldiers, nothing like the stamp of men who held Singat, who were mostly Bashi Bazouks of the country, half-breeds of Egyptian and Turkish origin. The fate of Tokar and Singat left Osman Digna, as representative of the Mahdi's power, in undisputed mastery of the whole Eastern Soudan district, and he had representatives of every one of the tribes of the Eastern Soudan with him at Tamaai. His fame spread far and wide as the conqueror of four Egyptian forces and two garrisons. No wonder the ignorant tribesmen flocked to the Mahdi's standard, and they believed in his divine mission, as nothing in their history could compare with it in ancient or modern times. Mahomed Ali's conquest of the Soudan was as nothing in comparison to what he had done in such a short time.

The expedition began to arrive, and was quickly forwarded on to Trinkitat, very few of the soldiers landing at Suakim. I shall not give full details of all that took place, as it has been so fully written about, and I was not present at the Trinkitat to Tokar expedition, when the battle of El Teb was fought. My services were required at Suakim, and I had now plenty to do, as all the police work was given over to me as well as the outside work. The police needed thorough overhauling; three-fourths of the men did not know their duty, and could not be relied on to carry out the most ordinary work. It was no use turning them adrift, as there were no substitutes to put in their places; fining them as a punishment could not be thought of, as their wages were so small that the married men could not support their families in a proper manner before the outbreak, and now everything had risen to war prices.

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Their one source of income also, backsheesh, was done away with, as no one was coming in from the outside.

I thought the best way of getting them into better order was to be severe with the prisoners brought in for creating breaches of the peace; and as plenty of labour was required, and plenty of people, especially the Jeddah coolies, insisted on getting drunk and making disturbances, I gave every one hard labour that came before me, and those who had been guilty of assault hard labour and the stick as well. Jeddah people are great cowards, and fear the stick more than anything. I soon improved the discipline of the town, and the Admiral complimented me on the difference there was, and never altered a single one of my sentences. The stick was served out to those who deserved it at about seven o'clock every morning, and on one or two occasions I was offered money to let a man off a thrashing; I used always to chaff them when they offered me money and told them it was not my price. I met several old friends from India belonging to the regiments that had been stopped on their way home to take part in the campaign. I knew a great many of the officers of the regiments that had come down from Egypt, and my house used to be a general meeting-place, people coming in all day long for "pegs" to have a yarn, and to know what was going on outside. It used to be hard to remember all the names—faces I never forget, and before many days were out I was on speaking terms with nearly every officer of the expedition.

I went on board the steamer that brought General Graham down immediately she came into port, and I was the first person to give him the news of the fall of Tokar, which he did not like, as the supposed object of his mission was gone, and as far as the English were concerned they

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had no cause to fight except it was to aid General Gordon and to complicate matters. I suppose the policy at home was that, while the troops were there, they might as well kill someone, and the sentiment was that it will never do now we occupy Egypt to allow those that had beaten them in fair fight to rest on their laurels. Ours seemed rather a bullying kind of policy; the Soudan was abandoned, and our fighting the tribes could not be defended altogether, although I suppose there was just as much argument in favour of fighting as there was against it. I never heard it given out, which was certainly our most plausible excuse, that we had come to revenge the murder of an English official, Consul Moncrieff, while on duty in his district. As for the death of General Hicks and his staff, they were in Egyptian pay, and were killed in the interior of the Soudan; there was too much readiness on behalf of the home authorities to fight, and, as I said before, another great mistake was that General Gordon had not gone into the Soudan *viâ* the East Coast.

Suakim was now very busy, and at the close of the month we saw nearly the whole of General Baker's late force out of the place. He and a few of his staff remained behind to aid the English expedition with their now valuable experience and local knowledge. While the expedition was assembled at Trinkitat Suakim was perfectly quiet, and the garrison was reduced to a few marines and blue-jackets. There was now no cause for fear, as the number of men-of-war and ships about made it unlikely that the Arabs would ever dream of attacking the town in force, and to attempt to storm a fortified position is entirely against their mode of fighting. It is different with the blacks, who will go at anything if properly led, but then they are far

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superior to the Arabs and to the Abyssinians, who also dislike storming positions.

Daily when I was out with the scouts we could see small bands of Arabs travelling from north to south. They generally passed opposite Suakim soon after daylight, showing that they had slept at Handub and were making for Tamaai. On the 29th of February they went along the Tamaai road in great numbers, and were all too late for the battle of El Teb, which was fought that day.

On the morning of the 1st of March I was out with the scouts, and they informed me that they had seen a native, who had escaped from them. On returning to the town I met Brewster at the fortifications. A native came up with a letter in his hand addressed to the Eastern Telegraph Station. Captain Hastings, the captain of H.M.S. *Euryalus*, who was then acting for Admiral Hewett, who was at Trinkitat with the expedition, luckily came up, and he was told that a great fight had come off the day before, and that the English had won. We all went to the Egyptian Commandant's Office, Colonel Hallam Parr, and the letter was opened and read. It was a telegram from Mr. Burleigh, the war correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, giving a splendid and detailed account of the battle of El Teb. The boy who had brought it had run up the whole way from Trinkitat across the desert, and had done his 45 miles during the night. He had got near the lines, and had to hide from the scouts as he thought he had done wrong by coming by land; thus he had been kept outside more than two hours longer than he should have been. After questioning the messenger, who said he had seen no one between Trinkitat and Suakim, Captain Hastings took Mr. Burleigh's report to the

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Telegraph Station, and after sending a small message to the home authorities, wired the contents home.* In the afternoon, at about four o'clock, the Admiral arrived from Trinkitat in H.M.S. *Sphinx*, and we got a full and detailed account of the stubborn fight. The Arabs seem to have fought most bravely; their pluck, or, more strictly speaking, fanaticism, in charging the English square was much admired. Poor deluded people! thinking they were going to do the same with our soldiers as they did with the Egyptians. What a shamble the road from the mainland at Trinkitat to Tokar must be, and how many thousands of people have already met their deaths there, and for what reason? Summed up in two words—maladministration and oppression.

I was sorry to hear of the death of an old schoolfellow in the 10th Hussars, Slade; his brother, of the artillery in the Egyptian Army, I knew also very well. They had not met for a long time, and it seemed hard being parted for ever by a quarrel which neither of them had any wish to partake in. Lieutenant Royds, of H.M.S. *Carysfort*, I also knew. Poor General Baker and his fighting friend Colonel Burnaby both received marks which they carried with them to the grave. We heard that the expedition was to come back to Suakim at once, and that Tamaai, Singat, and other places were to be visited, but nothing further was known.

*The war correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* had scored off the Government authorities by getting the news of the engagement home first, and I think Captain Hastings behaved in the right way in acting as he did. In time of war the Intelligence Department should have everything pass through them instead of leaving all interesting matters to the military Press Censor, who may be a man who does more harm than good. In this case Mr. Burleigh, by his own endeavours and with no help from the Government, had brought important news, which happily was of a victory and not of a defeat; had it been the latter he would have given the authorities an extra six hours' notice, and they would have had time to have got reinforcements ready, and still to have sent extra help to Trinkitat that day, while the time the Government news arrived would not have enabled the authorities so to do.

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In a few days we had the harbour crowded with transports and men-of-war, and no one could ever imagine that the place would have contained so many steamers, and that they could be berthed so easily. I had always said the harbour was a good one, and that it only wanted ordinary care and a little expenditure in the way of buoys to answer any mercantile purpose. The British India Steam Navigation Company's steamers had been running to Suakim occasionally, and some of the commanders had given it a very bad name and said it was most dangerous and not fit to accommodate a steamer of 300 feet long, and that there was not room for more than three or four steamers at a time. Now we have vessels up to 400 feet nearly, and thirty big vessels laying at anchor at one time—transports the size of the *Crocodile*, *Jumna*, and *Orontes*. The bad name that the pioneer English commanders, who shall be nameless, gave it, did much harm, as an argument to the effect that the port would not be big enough to accommodate the traffic of the place was used against making the Suakim-Berber railway. The tonnage now in the harbour would be equivalent to a million tons of produce per annum, which the Soudan, unless it is speedily opened up, will not export and import during the remainder of the 19th century.

There was a great noise at the time made about a proclamation sent out after a long consultation by Admiral Hewett and other authorities, offering a reward for Osman Digna, dead or alive. The newspaper correspondents are a great nuisance sometimes, and in this instance, by their telegraphing home to the public prints, they entirely put a stop to the proclamation, and it was withdrawn.

The facts of the case were these: Osman Digna had not,

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like some of the other people in the Soudan, revolted against Egyptian misrule; he merely preached Mahdism and set up as the agent of the false prophet Mahomed Achmed. His case was therefore different from the others. He had committed acts entirely inexcusable, and against all the laws of either savage or civilized nations. His most heinous offence was killing, in cold blood, a messenger who, with a flag of truce, arrived with a letter from the Admiral. This was inexcusable, as there was hereafter no dealing with him. If the proclamation had been in a proper legal form, and had enumerated his offences, everyone would have understood it. I gave my opinion on the subject before the document was issued, and I was told I was too long-winded, and I immediately replied, "Better be that than misunderstood." To the world in general it looked as if we could not catch Osman Digna and were unable to fight against him, and that we therefore offered a reward for his assassination to any of his followers. As regards the natives, it was also a mistake, for it was a perfect proof to them that we did not understand the question. By being a little too vague in the proclamation it was misunderstood everywhere; had it contained a clear and concise statement as to why the reward was offered it would have met with universal approbation, would have won us many friends among the natives, and would, in all probability, have secured Osman Digna alive. Thus the rising would have been more easily put down, as the tribesmen would have had no recognized representative of the Mahdi, and to have procured another from El Obeid would have taken some time, while no new leader would have had the influence that Osman Digna possessed with the local tribes.

By the 10th of March everything was ready for another

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move forward from Suakim against Tamaai. The expedition had been rapidly brought back from Tokar and Trinkitat, encamped on the southern side of the harbour in the fine hard plain, the most healthy site near Suakim. The force consisted of the 10th and 19th Hussars (the former from India, stopped on their way home), the 42nd Black Watch, 75th Gordon Highlanders, the 60th Rifles, a Naval Brigade from the ships in the harbour, Marines from all parts of the China, East Indian, and Mediterranean stations, a fine body of men, who had never drilled together before; the 15th York and Lancaster Regiment, the 89th Irish Fusiliers, and the Mounted Infantry from Egypt, and Artillery both from Egypt and India.

On the 10th March, then, there was a move forward, nearly due south from Suakim, to a zareba made by Baker Pasha, some six miles out, which was reconstructed and water stored there, as the transport was but meagre for the force and there was no reserve of transport animals to draw on. The 42nd were left in the zareba to protect it. On the evening of the 11th the force marched out to Baker's zareba, as it was called. I had been told on the 10th that my services and those of the Abyssinian scouts, some fifty of them altogether, would be required, and that I should have to take them out to Baker's zareba, scouting from the Shartes wells outside the town, which would make my march about a mile to a mile and a half on the right of the force. My road would be chiefly through the thickest of the bush.

Late in the afternoon I was asked by the Naval Brigade if I could procure them some mules for their reserve ammunition. This I was luckily enabled to do, and on my leaving the Police Station at about 8.30 p.m. I found they had not yet all started. My old friend Lieutenant Graham, R.N., was in

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charge of the reserve ammunition, and we started together, and in the bush soon came across the other mules with the blue-jackets, who had lost their way, as they could not see the signal lantern at Baker's zareba. I being on my dromedary could see the light sometimes, but only at rare intervals, as the bush was so thick and high. It was a fine moonlight night, and every inch of the country was familiar to me. But moonlight is deceptive and alters considerably the look of the country, as the range of vision is so much smaller and dark obstacles look so much bigger. Being placed on a camel so high from the ground also alters the look of the vegetation.

We did the distance fairly quickly, but had to stop on several occasions to rearrange packs which got displaced by the thick mimosa trees. It is a good thing that the Arabs do not like attacking by night, as if they had done so when the troops covered such a lot of ground, what with the bush and the smoke from the guns it would have given the enemy a great advantage, and there would have been some hard fighting in which their numbers might have told. If they had been beaten off it would have only been after an enormous loss on our side, and if once the troops had taken panic it would have ended in disaster. In Abyssinia we should have been certain to have been attacked, and Tedelar, the chief of my Abyssinian scouts, was explaining to me when coming along the road the Abyssinian method of attack, and pointed out a good place for ambush. He said that they invariably attacked at the front and on either side of the two flanks and the rear simultaneously, but that the front attack was nearly always a false one and that they retreated and tried to draw their enemy on; that the pace they moved at

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and their local knowledge made it very difficult for their foes to ever keep touch with them or be certain where they would be at any time. He thought that now King John had so many rifles he was more than a match for any country.

When within two miles of the zareba I went on as fast as I could with eight of the scouts to find out if Colonel Green, of the Black Watch, who was in command, wanted my services, and he was surprised to see me so soon. I was last away and first in by more than an hour. He told me that I had better take a turn round for about a mile ahead to see if anyone was about, so I left my camel in the zareba and did a little silent bush creeping with the Abyssinians to see if anyone was watching. We could see no one, so returned and reported everything quiet. I then got my supper out, as I had had no dinner, and I asked some of the 42nd and Commissariat officers if they were hungry. It was a good thing I had brought such a lot of provender with me. Loaves of new bread, legs of mutton, cold chickens, hard boiled eggs, and everything were soon disposed of, and in a little time there was nothing left of the two bags full of food I had brought. My next day's food was behind on another camel, as, although I was to mess with General Graham's staff, I considered it was better to have a private supply if necessary, and it proved to be acceptable to many a hungry officer, as on account of having so little transport they were on rather short commons. I got my scouts a good place to sleep alongside the Commissariat quarters, and I dropped asleep soon after 12 o'clock, having been on the move all day long since daylight.

Before sunrise we were all up, and after some cocoa and biscuits with General Graham's staff, I was told to take my

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scouts and advance with the reconnoitring party, which consisted of the mounted infantry, under Captain Humphreys. I knew all the officers and good men they were. Colonel Ardagh, R.E., was in charge, and head of the Intelligence Department, and among others was another old friend of mine, Major Slade, of the R.A. and Egyptian Army. The early morning was a little warm, and there were few clouds, so we had a beautifully clear day for seeing, and the desert being nice and green in places, showing that the sun had not yet dried up all the moisture from the rains, there was no mirage, which is very bad on this road in summer time. The mounted infantry spread out towards the Tokar road, which we left to the east soon after leaving Suakim. Our direction was towards Tamaai, which was a great deal more to the right, and the Cassala road was also just to the left of Baker's zareba. Nearly all the poles of the telegraph line which runs alongside the Cassala road had been pulled down and destroyed, but the wire had not been taken away.

We kept away from the bush and in the open the whole way, the ground being hard and good for troops, and walking easy. After advancing about three miles the outline of the lower hills round Tamanieb and the opposite side of Khor Ghob showed up better, and on our extreme left front from the furthest-off mounted infantry, who were nearly a mile away signalling, some rebels came in sight. They proved to be Osman Digna's mounted scouts with camels grazing in the Khor Ghob, and at sight of us they immediately made off towards Tamaai. The nearer we approached, the Intelligence Staff could see plainly the formation of the country and the curious range of isolated hills running out into the plain, which extends from Tamaai to the Tokar road, and separates Khor Ghob from the Tokar road from Tamaai.

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At the foot of the small end hill in the plain the telegraph runs, and there are some very fine shady mimosa trees, under which I have camped in happier times. Three miles further on than this hill is a large open plain, where a good deal of dhurra is grown after the rains, and where good shooting can be had. The only hills on the Suakim side of Khor Ghob are two small isolated ones, called Teselah, where I had also been on a former occasion. From the summit a good view of Tamaai is obtainable.

When we got a little closer to Teselah, whither Colonel Ardagh decided to go, we could see more of Osman Digna's scouts, but they soon bolted towards Tamaai, and disappeared in the Khor. Colonel Ardagh then went up with Major Slade to the top of the nearest Teselah hill and had a good look at the country. They could see many rebels on the banks of the Khor and of the different nullahs that run into it. But few mat huts were visible; they are nearly all built in the depression of the ground, of which the whole formation of Tamaai consists. The depressions are mostly of a circular form, separated from one another by rocky ridges and stony ground. The ground at the back of the line of hills is, if anything, more suitable to defence, and gives better cover. The water at Tamaai, however, is a better strategical position, as it is the native key to the best roads to Erkoweet and Singat, and a force from there can easily watch the Cassala road, by keeping under cover in the thick-grown bushes in Khor Ghob. Tokar road can also be watched, as from the end of the Khor Ghob there is a good view of all the ground between it and the sea, over which the Tokar road passes.

Colonel Ardagh was perfectly satisfied of the enemy's presence in large force, and he signalled and sent back

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Major Slade to General Graham with the result of the reconnaissance. We then went slowly back, and on looking round could plainly see the rebels on the banks, and I was told to hurry my Abyssinians up. They joined with the rear-guard of the mounted infantry, and talked a great deal with the men, although I don't suppose they understood much of what was said, as the only means of communication between both was broken Arabic. The Abyssinians seemed to be the best of friends with all the soldiers and sailors in the place, and I wish there had been 500 of them instead of fifty, for they would have been the men to chase the rebels over the broken ground and up the mountains after defeat by our troops.

It now began to get very hot, and the hares were much tamer than in the early morning. On our way out to Teselah we had seen a good deal of game in one way or another, consisting of dorcas gazelle, hares, bustard, sand grouse, quail, doves, and an occasional fox. The gazelle could not quite make out what was up, as wherever they went there were mounted infantry that turned them, and they at last went off at full speed and broke through the lines. Just before getting back to the zareba we met all the troops on the march on their way to Teselah. It was a fine sight, and there could be no doubt that they were as splendid a lot of men as could be found in the world. I should think that there were more young men in the 60th than in any other regiment. The 65th and 89th were oldish men, being on their way home from India after long service there. The 42nd and 75th had been through the 1882 campaign in Egypt, and the cavalry, the 10th and 19th, had also been in the East a long time.

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I stopped and went on with the Naval Brigade a little way, and a rough-and-ready lot they looked. The blue-jacket on land looks a curious fellow beside his soldier brother, but he can do many a thing in which the soldier would be altogether at sea. I was told to return to the zareba, and come on with the last of the baggage and scout on its left flank, so as soon as I arrived I at once set to work to get something to eat, as I was very hungry and thirsty after my ride. I saw the scouts get their food after some trouble about their rations, and a great difficulty about their water. They were only put on the same quantity as others, and this is really not enough for a mountaineer in the hot plains. Presently I started once more with the last of the commissariat animals for Teselah. It was most amusing on the road to see the hares; they did not understand the "tumasha" that was going on, and they were running here, there, and everywhere, looking so curious with the sun shining on their long ears, which look nearly transparent, and betray them in the grass.

The country between Baker's zareba and Teselah is open and easily marched, and perfectly practicable for wheel traffic; the open belt may be nearly two miles wide, with a few bushes only in the channels where the rain drains the plain. From near Teselah to within a mile of the last night's zareba there is very dense bush, and the mimosa and other trees on the Khor Ghob side are also thick. We progressed but slowly, as we could not go quicker than the transport animals. Within two and a half miles of Teselah we met the cavalry coming back to the zareba, as there was not room for them at the new zareba, and they were to return at daylight next day. Soon after leaving the cavalry and General Stewart we heard firing at Teselah, and saw several

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shells fired, which looked as if a fight were going to take place. The Abyssinians were delighted, and danced and sang with glee, but as soon as I called to them they got into their fighting formation. I got all the commissariat animals well together, and continued our march at a much quicker pace, as it was now getting dusk. It was just dark as we reached the camp, and I then heard that many of the rebels had been seen at about 1,500 yards on the Khor Ghob, and that after the shells had been fired they quickly scampered into their cover.

Being the last to arrive in the zareba, I found all the best places occupied, and I at last found one with the remains of two mimosa trees, which had nearly all been cut down to make the zareba. I set my Abyssinians to work to clear the ground of thorns and branches, so as to make a comfortable sleeping place. With so many hands it was soon done. I then made them fasten their two camels and mine together, and fix them down so as to prevent their rising or moving along on all fours. I then gave the camels their food, piled my men's rifles, and made them put their blankets down in a line, and kept them together, as they all seemed to wish to look about, got them their biscuits and tins of beef, sugar, &c. I then went off to report myself to General Graham.

I just got in time for dinner, and a very merry one it was, considering all things, and the very scratch lot of utensils and plates. We did not, however, have all the luxuries that some generals go in for, but plenty of plain, substantial food, and I enjoyed it uncommonly. We had a smoke, too, and some tea, and then the generals went their round of inspection. On my return to my sleeping-place I found nearly all the scouts fast asleep, except

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those I had told off to keep the first watch, four men at a time each watch for two hours' duration. My men must have been tired, as they had had over 12 hours on foot and little to drink. I found that my camping place was just between and behind the right company of the 75th and the left company of the 60th; behind us, again, were some of the transport animals and artillery; and to my left General Davis's servants and horses, and to my right an open space behind the 60th. Captain Menzies of the 75th had his sleeping place within a few yards of me, and as he could not get to sleep, and I did not feel very tired, he came over to my carpet and sat down to talk.

In about ten minutes firing began from the rebels on the front face of the zareba, which effectually woke up everyone, a good many with a start. It was curious to hear the suppressed murmurs all round the zareba, which contrasted strangely with the dead stillness that reigned before, only broken by the occasional cry of a camel or the noise of fighting mules. The firing commenced about 11 o'clock with a few dropping shots; soon it got much brisker, and bullets went sighing along over our heads, falling well away to the rear over the ground which we had come over from Baker's zareba. There was a slight rise in the ground on the front side of the zareba facing Tamaai, and this sheltered us from the enemy's direct fire, their shots ricocheting on the hard ground and flying high over us, the ball making that peculiar whistling sound which always denotes its having struck and rebounded from the earth. Very few bullets fell in the zareba. Some, however, could be heard striking the boxes belonging to the commissariat, and other objects.

The enemy then began to work round both flanks, and getting closer, and at one time (although I knew it was

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against their custom), I thought they would really attack in force, as they came within 400 yards of the Teselah side of the zareba, and shouted and abused us, calling us infidels, Christian dogs, and other pretty names. When they got to their closest point, which was in the bush and never in the open, there was a sort of sullen roar of voices, and the troops stood to their arms. This soon subsided when they knelt down behind the zareba and waited the coming attack. There was only one shot fired from the zareba, by a sentry at an Egyptian who, when the enemy threatened to attack, bolted through the zareba hedge and got killed. In about a quarter of an hour one could see by the flashes of the enemy's rifles that he was retiring. The shooting was atrocious, and by the long flash one could see that the rebels were holding their rifles very high and did not know how to use them. Having been shot at now so many times at night, I could always tell when I might expect a bullet to come near by the flash, which, when the rifle is aimed properly, looks simply like a quick expiring spark, and when held high it is like the long flash from a signalling lantern.

The enemy retired towards Tamaai, keeping up a brisk fire; the rebels were then joined by many others, who opened fire from their Khor, and kept up a fusillade for hours, which rendered night perfectly hideous. I snatched a few minutes' disturbed repose at times, but sleep was nearly out of the question, and I never hope to pass another night like the 12th of February. I shall never forget it as long as I live. Captain Menzies also could not sleep, and I asked him to come over to me, which he did. All the time of the threatened attack I was alongside him and my Abyssinians. I would not allow my men to load their rifles, but only to use their swords, which I believed would

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have been more effective if a rough and tumble fight had taken place, especially as it was a bright moonlight night and very clear. We sat talking away for a long time, and while he was with me the bullets came pretty thick into our part of the zareba. General Davis's charger got hit, as well as one or two mules and camels quite close to us. One bullet went into the sand within two yards of us, and not a foot from Tedelar's head, who immediately began abusing the natives and telling them to wait till to-morrow, when he would be even with them.

At about half-past three the firing grew fainter, and was only kept up from isolated groups by the natives placed at wide intervals along the Khor. This was annoying, as it kept us all from going to sleep, so at four o'clock Major Slade came to me and told me to get the Abyssinians ready to go out, and that General Graham wished to speak to me; so off I had to go, thinking what I was wanted for, as I did not at all relish going out through the bush, which might be full of Arabs, and that they would be down on us long before we could get back, and if we did bring them on the only thing to be done would be to shoot down scouts and Arabs together. General Graham, who was on his camp bed, said, "Wylde, just go out with your scouts and see if you cannot stop those fellows from firing at us, and come back and let me know what you have seen." I said, "Yes, sir," and felt inclined to say, "I would much rather you went out than me."

So away I went back to the Abyssinians and explained to them what they were to do. They did not seem to mind the work in the least. I got well chaffed by some of the officers, and Menzies said, "I will look after your things if you don't come back." We walked in front of

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the 75th and 89th, between them and the zareba hedge, which was very flimsy in some places, and out of the right corner of the front face of the zareba, where Major Slade was waiting. He walked with me to the top of the ridge, and I then went on with the scouts down the slight bank and up the other side to the bush, where I remained in cover with about 20 of the scouts, sending on the others to crawl along the bush to see if there was anyone hidden. One of them came back and reported all clear; the bullets were only coming over us in twos or threes at a time, and we could see from where we were that the bush ran nearly up to their position.

Between us and their position was some open ground which could not be crossed, as we should be seen, so leaving a few men in the bush, whom I told to fire if they saw the rebels crossing to try and cut us off, I went on through the bush to the right, and then as soon as I got to the main scrub advanced another two hundred yards and then got a good view of the banks of the Khor. We could see the enemy in groups along its whole length, and just catch faint sounds when they called to each other, and could see the moonlight glinting on their spear heads and gun barrels. The morning was very bright, nearly as light as day, and as we could have done no good, and might have brought on an attack, we returned to the zareba at 5 a.m., and very glad I was to get back. The furthest point we went out was about 800 yards, and the nearest point of the Khor to the zareba was a little over 1,200 yards, averaging from that to about 1,600 yards. I told General Graham what I had done, and soon after they left off firing, I suppose to go to prayer and to their first food.

I laid down for about half-an-hour, and then went to head-quarter-staff to get some cocoa. Before the sun rose the

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enemy commenced firing again, but left off after a couple of shells were fired at them. We then had breakfast, and before it was over I was told to get the Abyssinians ready and take them with the mounted infantry again. I got them with difficulty a drink of water, as they were not rationed like the soldiers, and got them together. They refused to go further without more water. General Graham thought they were mutinous, and told me to tell them if they refused to obey orders they should be sent back to Suakim. They replied, "Give us water." It was explained to them they had had their water, and they replied it was not enough, that they had to run with the horses, and if they ran with them they must drink with them.

This answer rather pleased General Graham, and he ordered them back to get more water, which they did, and they then set off with me to join the mounted infantry, who were already in scouting formation, and advancing from the left flank of the zareba towards the Khor, and in a line with the end of the valleys of hills on the further side of Khor Ghob. It was a pretty sight seeing the troops form up in battle array. The 2nd Brigade, which was on the left, was commanded by General Davis, and consisted of the 42nd, 65th, and Marines, with the Naval Brigade with their machine guns. Then came Major Holly's battery of artillery, and on the right, some distance off, the 1st Brigade, under General Buller, which was formed of the 75th, 89th, and 60th Rifles, with a battery of artillery. The zareba was made smaller, and left in charge of some soldiers of various regiments, Royal Engineers and different combatants, and was, of course, now the thorn hedge was not all wanted, much stronger than during the night. The cavalry

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were arriving from Baker's zareba, and covered the rear and flanks of the infantry.

During the early morning, Mr. Bewley, formerly my clerk, to whom I had given permission to join General Baker's force, had come out from Suakim with a spy sent by the Admiral, and who informed General Graham that the enemy intended to attack as soon as the soldiers had arrived at the banks of Khor Ghob, which are here very steep and give splendid cover to any number of Arabs. The only news of importance this spy brought that the Intelligence Department did not know was the moment the attack would take place, and I hardly think enough notice was taken of it, as it turned out exactly as he said, and the attack was delivered when the troops were within 150 yards of the enemy's position; and if the 2nd Brigade had been halted and waited for it instead of advancing to meet it there would not have been the terrible loss of so many brave men to lament. There seemed to be a dead stillness over everything, as when a tropical storm is going to break, or like the calm that often precedes a storm at sea; the only living things that seemed to be excited were the birds, especially the sand grouse and the desert plover. The former were flying about in large packs, prevented from getting their usual morning drink at the water at Tamaai, owing to its being occupied, while their feeding ground was taken up by the troops advancing. The morning was bright and the desert looked calm, the fresh greens of the mimosa and other bushes relieving the eye from the general browns of the hills and desert. The enemy opened a slight fire on the mounted infantry advancing, but as they were in very open order no one was hit. The Abyssinians also came in for their share of

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the fire, though there were no casualties while the open and bush towards the Khor were being crossed. As soon as the Khor was reached the mounted infantry at once commenced to dismount and fire. The Abyssinians also opened fire.

We were then a good 500 yards to the right of the enemy's position, and we could see the dense black mass of the tribesmen waiting for the infantry to come on. Nearly every shot of ours must have told on the mass, as it seemed impossible to miss so great a crowd of people so close together at such a short range. The enemy began to open a heavier fire on us, and we could see that they were resting their rifles on the rocks so as to take steadier aim. Captain Humphreys told me to go back and tell General Graham that the enemy were waiting for him. I then walked back from the banks of the Khor towards the 2nd Brigade, which was not yet formed up in square formation. On looking round I could see that the right of the mounted infantry was slowly retiring, and that two of my Abyssinians were down. Bullets were now whistling about in all directions; very few of them fell short, which I was glad to see, as there was a chance of getting hit by a ricochet and very little chance of being struck by a direct shot, owing to their not knowing how to use the rifle. I got back into the square between two companies of the 42nd that had not been wheeled outwards, and just as I got into the square the formation began and everyone was busy. I could see the red flag carried behind General Graham, but had not time to get up to it when the enemy came on with a cry to their patron sheik of the desert, Sheik Abdul Cader. I distinctly heard their cry of "Sheik Abdul Cader" and their word "Forward;" and

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then I know not what happened, as everything was in confusion.

It was lucky for me that I was off my camel, which one of my Abyssinians was holding, for we immediately got separated by the Egyptian camel men in the inside of the square bolting. My helmet was knocked off and a camel nearly trod on it, and I had to wait till he passed it before I could pick it up. I was then carried away with the retreating transport animals, and at last found myself jammed up against a company of marines, round which I made my way. The Abyssinians had got my camel, which was perfectly unmanageable, and his head-stall all adrift. At last he broke away and went off as hard as he could towards Suakim, and was finally caught by the cavalry. The officers had recognized the animal and its saddle, and thought I had been killed or wounded. I could now look round, as the transport animals were a long way in the rear, and I saw hand-to-hand fighting going on everywhere and the square formation entirely gone. The troops seemed to be all rallying on what was now the left of the marines, and the cavalry were coming up also on the left of what was the square, dismounting and firing volleys into the enemy, was coming up in hundreds on the front and right of what had been the square.

A limber now came tearing along. The riders were perfectly unable to manage the animals, and, as they were making for me, I and the Abyssinian ran to their heads and luckily stopped them before they could break through the marines. They were turned back, and I ran, hanging on to the limber, and at last jumped on behind the ammunition box. We came across two or three marines who had got driven back by the transport that had

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broken through them, and a little further on, to my horrer, I saw a nasty old grey-headed Arab armed with a spear and shield running after us. I called to the drivers and asked them if they had any cartridges for the carbines that were tied on the limber, and they said "No." I called to my Abyssinian, who was about thirty yards off, to stop and kill the Arab, but in the noise he did not hear me, and the old brute was getting nearer and nearer. Presently my Abyssinian heard my shout and turned round, took a shot with his Remington, but the cartridge missed fire. He then turned and ran back. The Arab got within 80 yards, but, thank goodness! a stern chase is always a long one. For some unaccountable reason he turned away from our direction for about 50 yards. I think his zeal had carried him into danger, as he also had got away from his companions. Then we came across a blue-jacket who did not know where he was, and I said, "Jack, fire at that man," but he was out of breath with running, and he also missed him, which was a pity, for the old Arab was now putting on a spurt to come up to us. The sailor and my Abyssinian now waited behind, and let our pursuer get within 40 yards, and they fired simultaneously and over he went.

I gave a sigh of relief when I saw him down. The few minutes the chase lasted seemed to me hours. I had nothing with me but a camel stick. While this was going on I could get glimpses through the smoke and dust of the fight, and I could see that although our men were still falling back they were holding their own, and that the enemy were catching it from the cavalry and mounted infantry from the left flank of the 2nd Brigade, and from Holly's battery and the front face of Buller's 1st Brigade on the right. When I got up to Holly's battery it was committing great havoc with case at

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a short range, and the Arabs, who were rushing at it, seemed to be swept away from the front of the guns. Only one man reached them, and he had been killed. Here I met with Mr. Scudamore, the correspondent of the *Times*, who had been laughing at the old Arab chasing us. He offered me his horse and a drink. I accepted the latter, as my mouth was full of dust. We stood and watched the battle; the right of the Arabs was just coming into action, and their formation, which was like a half-moon, overlapped the front and right face of the 1st Brigade right up to the zareba. Buller had his men well in hand, just as if they were at a review. He commenced firing volleys at them. The Arabs, who were in irregular formation, and from three to ten deep, came along at a run, and it was just like a big black wave running up to a beach. It began to break on the crest, the white foam being represented by the men that fell simultaneously with every volley, and the wave began to grow less and less the more it neared the square. Within 250 yards it nearly ceased, and not one man could get near enough to use his spear. It was an awful sight, and as an exhibition of pluck, or rather fanaticism, it could not be equalled. Poor deluded Arabs! thinking that they could do anything with their spears and swords out in the open against disciplined English troops armed with rifles of precision. The zareba also repelled the very faint attack that was made against it, and with this the most severe part of the fighting came to an end. The majority of the rear face of the 1st Brigade and part of the left face had not fired a shot. Scudamore and I had a splendid view of the last attack. The 2nd Brigade had nearly ceased firing, only a few shots now and then coming from it, and when the smoke cleared away we saw the guns belonging to the Naval

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Brigade far in front of the position that the soldiers now occupied, and it was the first intimation we had that at one time all the machine guns had been lost.

The position of the 2nd Brigade was as follows:—On its extreme left furthest out the mounted infantry on the banks of the Khor; then the cavalry; then followed the 42nd, 65th, and Marines in a sort of semi-circular line; then Holly's battery, and then the 1st Brigade in square formation. Just before the attack on the 1st Brigade was over the majority of the Abyssinians returned from the zareba, where they had taken their wounded, two of them shot through the leg and another speared through the leg and cut down the back. I was sorry that Tedelar, the chief, and one of the corporals were among the wounded, as it struck two of the best men off the list. The Abyssinians had helped to bring the wounded in. They had to carry them the whole way, as they did not know where to get stretchers. My small party was now reduced to about twenty, as the others had remained behind in the zareba to help at the hospital and to do other work; so as soon as the advance of the 1st Brigade was made they were placed at the left of the square. It was most curious to watch some of the wounded Arabs, who, as soon as they had recovered from the stunning effects of their wounds, would get on their feet and walk round in circles as old dazed people, and as soon as they found out where they were would make for the square, only to be shot down. I never saw one instance of a man trying to get away, as they all came on like bull dogs, and never did men throw away their lives as they did.

After making an advance of about 200 yards the square halted, and the artillery opened fire to the south on some

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retreating Arabs who had evidently not taken part in the attack; a large body, fully a thousand strong, could be seen making off north about two or three miles off. These I knew to be some of the Amarar tribes, who were with Osman Digna by compulsion, and using their first opportunity to escape from him. It was a cruel sight as soon as we got among the dead and wounded; the latter, although they could hardly move, would take no quarter, and it became absolutely necessary to put an end to them, as they were wounding our men, and, although in a crippled state, would fight to the last. It was useless taking their arms from them, as they would try and crawl on to the nearest weapon to have a chance of killing a Christian in the hope of going straight to Paradise.

There was one plucky action done on the part of an Arab, who if he had been in the English army would have got his Victoria Cross. One of the ammunition limbers of the Naval Brigade had been taken away and drawn down a little dividing nullah that takes the drainage from the open ground between Teselah and the Khor. This nullah was about 50 yards across, and divides the high banks of the Khor. I knew it well, as I used to walk there from our camping ground near the water to shoot the sand grouse on the plain. The Arab, finding he could not move the limber by himself, put down his shield and spear, pulled some dry grass, lighted it, and put it in the limber among the ammunition; after he saw the limber was fairly lighted he picked up his spear and shield, waved them round his head, and walked down into the Khor. This was done under a heavy fire. The limber soon blazed up, and afterwards when we got close to it the cartridges were going off, but not going any height

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up out of their box, so it was not dangerous. The cool way in which the Arab performed his work was greatly admired by all who saw him.

When the 2nd Brigade had been reformed the two brigades marched forward to the Khor, the 1st Brigade being just above the nearly stagnant pools of water that are sometimes found in its bed. Just as they arrived at the brink about 150 men charged up from their hiding-places and made another attack, mostly towards the right corner of the 2nd Brigade. The Marines opened fire upon them, and as the left corner of the 1st Brigade was slightly in the line of fire some of them got knocked over, and an Abyssinian alongside of me got wounded by a bullet shot between the legs. Surgeon-Major MacDowell, in command of the Medical Department, had a narrow escape, as the mule he was standing by that was carrying water tins got hit twice, one bullet on the flank and another went through one of the water tins.

We halted for a good half-hour on the banks, and the whole ground around was thick with corpses, those killed by the shell fire having most ghastly wounds. In some places the dead were literally in heaps, and in all sorts of positions; there were several standing against trees and bushes, and one man shot through the chest was standing looking over the mimosa bush with his arms wide spread over the top; in one hand he held his spear and another his shield, his eyes were wide open, and it was only when one got within a few feet that the eye could be seen to have the film of death on it. I never saw a more natural position. Very few of the dead wore the dervishes' dress, the majority had their topes gathered tight round the waist with just a bit of red or blue cloth

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sewn on it to mark that they acknowledge Mahomed Achmed as their Lord and Master. But few had their beards shaved, and the majority had the luxuriant hair which has got the Arabs of the Eastern Soudan the sobriquet of "Fuzzy." Many Arabs who were hiding among the rocks of the Khor charged out in bands of three or four, preferring to die with their face to the foe than run the risk of being shot down when retreating.

A little incident often causes a laugh even in time of battle. Two women who were hiding suddenly jumped up from behind a bush and commenced running away; one of them was young, the other very old. The latter, who only wore a large cloth, some silver ornaments, and some beads, in passing a prickly bush got her cloth caught in a thorn, and off it came, and she was thus left with beads and ornaments only. She did not wait to pick up her cloth, but went on running, and I suppose was surprised that no one fired at her. After going for about 300 yards she stopped, pulled off a cloth from a body, and walked away quickly up the bed of the stream towards Tamanieb.

As my services were no longer required I was told to go back with the scouts and help in the zareba, and on my way over the field of battle to put a stop to any firing at the troops by the wounded, of which there were several. Within 100 yards of the rear of the 2nd Brigade there was a wounded Arab firing a Remington, but as he did not hold it to his shoulder he could not do much harm. I sent two Abyssinians to disarm him, and a little fight took place, which was soon over. Just as they had polished him off another Arab rushed out of a bush with a spear, which one of the Abyssinians knocked out of his hand with his rifle,

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and seized him by his fuzzy wig. The Arab tried to draw his knife, but the Abyssinian caught him by the other wrist, and they went wrestling about. In the meantime the other Abyssinian had drawn his sword and was waiting to get a cut at the Arab; in a moment the Arab's arm flew up with a sudden jerk that the other Abyssinian gave, and down came the sword with a side cut, and over the Arab went.

I saw several of these little isolated fights, which, although exciting to witness, were nevertheless very shocking to contemplate afterwards. The work, however, had to be done. It was now about one o'clock, and all the fighting was over. No man who has witnessed the horrors of a battle field can ever wish to see another. Certainly I do not, or to see another man killed in anger. It was a horrible sight, and one never to be forgotten; remains of human beings strewed about in their thousands, slaughtered, and for what purpose? Policy there was none. If I could have imagined any good to have been got out of killing these Arabs by a continuous action hereafter of help and trying to teach them the error of their ways I should have been happy. I felt the reaction now the fight was all over, and was most wretched. I had still, however, to keep my eyes open, and it was no time for wool-gathering, as there were many Arabs still hanging about in the distance and among the thick bush which the cavalry had not searched. The first thing I did on my way back was to begin to collect the arms lying about the field and putting them into heaps, and a miscellaneous collection they were—of all sorts; spears of all kinds and shapes, some made out of knives or bayonets tied to sticks; swords of all sorts belonging to the tribesmen, and officers' and

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cavalry swords belonging to the Egyptians, taken at the recent battles; rifles and carbines of the Remington pattern, and old smooth-bores. There were shields in hundreds, some perfectly riddled with bullet-holes.

I should not like to say how many wounded the scouts put an end to; they were having their revenge for the loss of their companions killed with General Baker's expedition at El Teb. I did not allow any cruelty, nor the killing of any wounded that did not show fight. The look some of the wounded gave one was something horrible, more like that of a wild animal when shot through the spine and crippled. The language they used was something disgusting, and showed no charitable or forgiving spirit, expressing a wish for revenge which, luckily for us, they would be for ever after powerless to carry out.

I was shocked to see the bodies of several women among the slain, and a great many boys, armed with little shields and diminutive lances, which were, however, quite big enough to kill with. During Baker Pasha's expedition at Trinkitat a boy came down by himself to the beach and attacked the Egyptian soldiers—a regular little Jack the Giant Killer. He was wounded in two places before he could be captured and disarmed. Baker Pasha sent him to Egypt to the Khedive.

When about half way from the Khor to the zareba I saw the cavalry form up to go over the battle-field to clear it from the enemy hiding in the bush. General Stewart, who passed, asked me if I was all right, as he had seen my camel running away to the rear. He asked me what I was doing, and I told him I was collecting the arms in heaps. I had a splendid silver-handled Arab sword in my hand, and he asked me to get him one, so I gave him the one

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I had, and told him there were lots more, and advised that if his staff and the cavalry wanted any arms as curios they had better pick up what we were collecting in heaps, and that I would make one pile of the best for the officers. On their way back they found a good collection. We remained in the middle of the battle-field while the cavalry went over it; they saw very few Arabs, as all those that were alive feigned death when they saw so many people together. Just close to the right hand front of the zareba we found two unwounded Arabs who had hidden in the bush, and, as they would not surrender, they had to be killed; one was armed with a sword, the other with a spear and shield. I would not allow the scouts to fire at them as they might have hit someone in the zareba, so they threw spears at them. The man with the sword warded off two spears thrown, but when two came simultaneously they were too much for him, and he dropped; the other was killed by a spear thrown from behind him, which went through his back and pinned him to the earth like a butterfly stuck to a board.

On reaching the zareba I had time for a good look at our last night's sleeping place. It had been well chosen, and the ridge of ground in front greatly favoured protection, as on it the bullets ricocheted and fell in the rear; the ridge was no protection from shots fired from the Teselah side or from the east side, and I expect the few casualties received during the night and early morning were from bullets fired from these directions. The only European killed during the night was an 89th man, and when he was hit no one knew, as when his next files tried to wake him in the morning they found him dead from a bullet wound in the head. Just at daylight a 60th man was hit in the side quite close alongside Major Menzies, and I believe there was only one other man touched.

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A good few of the transport animals were wounded, and the commissariat stores also showed many marks of bullet holes.

To the right of the zareba the broken ground at Tamaai on the north side of the Khor was visible, with its little wooded patches; behind it Tamanieb, with the mountain pass up to Erkoweet and the Khor Abent that leads up finally to Singat. On the front face, the Erkoweet mountains run south with a gentle curve, and between these mountains and the small range of hills that runs out into the plain on the opposite side of Khor Ghob can be seen the low land that stretches to Tokar and the Khor Barca Delta; to the east the sea, and the many reefs and small islands with ships at anchor at the southern anchorage. Facing about north, the plain stretches from Tamaai to Suakim; about half-way lie the tents in Baker's zareba; and over these Suakim, with men-of-war and transports at anchor, looms up large, with the heat rising from the desert; and to the west, to finish the picture, is the dense scrub round Tofrick, and the hills on the opposite side of the plain which run down to Hasheem, shutting out the view of Handub and everything further north. In the centre of what may be called the valley formed by the Erkoweet mountains and the hills above Hasheem, rise the peculiar red rocky hills of Aderob. Looking south from the zareba the whole ground is covered with black bodies looking like logs, and northwards there is not a single trace of the horrible work of the morning of the 13th March, the remains of which will be perfectly discernible for many a year to come—a lesson to the tribesmen of the misery occasioned by the False Prophet, Mahomed Achmed.

The hospital officials were now all busy with the wounded, and a sad sight it was to see the tents full of soldiers

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with all manner of wounds, some of the poor fellows suffering terrible pain. I looked out my Abyssinians, who were at first under a shady bush, and on coming up to Tedelar, he smiled and said, with an expletive, that the Arabs had lamed him for life, not, however, before he had shot a good many, and he wished that he could have been wounded at the end of the fight instead of so early in the day. His leg was broken about four inches above the ankle, and it had already been bandaged, as he was one of the first wounded to arrive. I left Tedelar with a box of cigarettes, which he immediately commenced to distribute among those of the wounded that cared to smoke, and went to have a chat with the doctors to see if I could be of any help. There were about 80 wounded already in the zareba, and I told them that, as far as I knew, another 10 to 15 still with the troops. It was here that I learnt the great loss that the Naval Brigade and 42nd had sustained. I knew that they must have lost heavily in the 2nd Brigade by the fact of their being broken, but taking the few casualties of the 1st Brigade, I did not think they would have lost so heavily. I was told that Lieutenant Montresor's body had been brought in, and I went to see it. Poor fellow, he was shot through the back and chest, evidently by a bullet from one of our side during the scrimmage; his face wore quite a calm expression, and he must have died instantaneously. By his death the *Euryalus* lost a pleasant messmate, and the service a gallant officer.

I found Lieutenant Conybeare, of the Naval Brigade, in the zareba sitting down in the shade; he had a narrow escape, struck down and stunned by a camel-stick, the blow striking him on the top of the head. How he escaped being speared was a miracle, as the enemy generally thrust their

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spears into any bodies on the ground to make certain they are dead. I soon got some lunch, and watched the heliograph working with Suakim, and sent in a message to say I was all right. I then went out with Major Turner of the Egyptian army, who was in command of part of the transport animals, to bring in the dead, and a horrible sight they were. Lieutenant Craven, of the 19th, had charge of the party. We soon came to where the majority of the bodies of the English were lying spread over really a very small bit of ground, considering the distance that the square had marched. The majority of those killed were just near the nullah, which was a perfect shamble. The bodies of the Naval Brigade were nearly all near the tracks of the wheels of their machine guns, showing that they had been killed near them. Those of the 42nd were all over the place, and some of them were literally covered up and surrounded with the bodies of the Arabs. I should not like to say how many dead there were here, certainly, however, not less than 1,500, of which about 600 were immediately in front of the leading face of the square. Here it was impossible to get down the banks of the nullah without treading on the bodies, and on the brink of it in some places they made quite a breastwork. I only went out once to bring in the dead, as the sight was too painful to look at long. Many of the 42nd had been hamstrung, showing that they had been surrounded. It was only by doing this that the Arabs could bring them to the ground. No regiment could have fought more pluckily than they, and the poor band of heroes lying still on the ground had nobly upheld the honour of their regiment. It was quite patent to the most casual observer that their heavy loss was only occasioned by their being surrounded. Had the square halted to receive the attack instead of meeting it, it

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would have been impossible to have lost so many men and so many of the supernumerary rank.

I saw a bunch of bodies of the 65th perfectly surrounded with dead Arabs, but I did not know at the time that among them was my old Ceylon friend Captain Ford, whom I had not met, till I had seen him in Suakim, for ten years. He had come to my house daily. I went back to the zareba, and just as I arrived there, Mosconas, the Staff Interpreter, came rushing in alarmed and perfectly incoherent for some time. I asked him what was the matter, and the only thing he replied was "Oh! those cruel Arabs." I at last got out of him that he had gone out with a sergeant in the Engineers, he to pick up curios and the latter to sketch, and while alongside a bush an Arab had come out and nearly chopped the sergeant's head off with one blow of his two-handed sword. I got the bushes pointed out to me, and sent off two of the best Abyssinians to kill the Arab. We all watched from the zareba, and in a short time we saw a very pretty fight between these two and three Arabs. The Abyssinians each shot one, and then they set on the third with their swords, and in about two minutes polished him off as well; meantime one of the first two that had been knocked over got up on his knees, and was promptly knocked over with a big stone and then despatched. They found another wounded man in the bush, whom they also killed, and returned to the zareba with the arms and shields of the four men, and got loudly cheered by some of the men who had seen what they had done. The sergeant's body was then brought in. The head was nearly severed from the body. It seemed hard lines getting killed in this way, and it only showed what a lot of savages the people of the Eastern

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Soudan become when their fanaticism is aroused, and the perfect justification of killing all armed men that were come across even although they were wounded. An attempt was made two or three times to save them, but although they were being carried by the men of the Hospital Corps, whenever they got a chance to get near a weapon they would try to spear or stick the bearers.

One little fiend of a boy, who was picked up insensible on the battle field, was taken to the hospital in the zareba and his wounds were bandaged. The first thing he did when he came to was to pull his bandages off and try to get hold of a man's bayonet. He was taken out of the tent and rebandaged, and his arms tied to his side. Father Brindle, the Roman Catholic priest attached to the army, who deserves the thanks of all for his kindness to the wounded and to everyone, was talking to the boy with me, and he asked for a drink. Father Brindle asked him through me whether he would like some milk, and he said "Yes." He was given a drink, Father Brindle supporting him, and he just filled his mouth full and spat it full in the Father's face, and then commenced using the most atrocious language, hoping that we should all die the most horrible of deaths.

My Abyssinian, who was with me, was in a rage, and wanted to kill the boy, but I said he was not to be hurt in any way. About half-an-hour after I was sent for, and found he had got his arms loose, torn off his dressings again, got hold of a spear, and had been trying to stab anyone that came near him, whereupon one of the scouts had knocked him down with a camel stick. I had him taken away and tied by his leg to a bush, and I was not sorry to see that he was quiet, but he would not allow himself to be rebandaged

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again. He died at about sunset, acting like a fiend to the last. Had he been left in hospital he might have killed someone, and the doctors and everyone had given him every chance of getting cured and being kindly treated, but he would accept nothing from a Christian or an Egyptian.

The only two other natives brought in wounded were a man and a woman, the latter a slave, who had been speared by the Arabs when she attempted to escape, the former a splendid Hadendowie, who had come from near Filik on the Atbara River with his six brothers, all of whom had been killed that morning, and he was the only survivor. He was very sullen at first, but afterwards, when I made friends with him in the hospital at Suakim, I heard his story, and he seemed very thankful for all that was done for him. He had obeyed the summons of his sheik, who was with Osman Digna, to come and fight against the Egyptians, who, it was reported, were sending more troops down with Christian officers. They had heard that Osman Digna had beaten the Egyptians and taken much plunder, so he and his six brothers set off from Filik to see what they could get. They had come to Tamaai only the day before, and had no idea they were going to fight against the same men who had been shooting game in their country. All his brothers were now dead, and if he recovered he would go back to his country and tell his friends how he had been treated, and how Osman Digna had proved himself a bad man and told lies. He had heard very little of the battle of El Teb and Osman Digna's defeat.

This poor man, after he was getting on very well, died of hospital gangrene. It was the only case of the kind at Suakim. I was sent for to the hospital tent by Major

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Turner to find out who one of the naval officers was that had been killed, as none of the Naval Brigade had returned yet. As soon as I went up I recognized the body as that of poor Houston-Stewart, of H.M.S. *Dryad*. It was nearly unrecognizable, being so hacked about. He was wearing a flannel shirt belonging to Captain Hulton, of his ship, and the mistake in the name had arisen in that way. The officer at the heliograph knew that Captain Hulton was not with the Naval Brigade, and refused to send his name down to the base as being killed.

It was melancholy to see the dead all laid out in rows according to the regiment or service to which they belonged. It was among these rows that I first saw Captain Ford's body. He had been killed by a sword cut, which had nearly divided his head, and I went to my traps and got out a clean white pocket handkerchief, which I tied round his face, for I could not bear to see it. It put me in mind of the happy days we had spent together in Point-de-Galle. I used to see him there regularly every day, and although he did not shoot he used often to come out with me when I went away for a day. The dead were buried about sunset, and I never remember anything more solemn than the funeral service in the desert. Mr. Todd, the chaplain of the *Euryalus*, gave a short address over the graves after he had read the burial service, and nearly all the officers who could spare time and General Graham and his staff were present. There seemed to be a death-like silence over everything, the preacher's voice being the only one heard, and the words of hope and consolation spoken by him went to the hearts of many. At the close of his oration many an eye was dim with hot tears, and I daresay many a heartfelt prayer

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of thankfulness for the merciful escape many had on that terrible 13th day of March was breathed. The heavens with their light fleecy clouds were lighted up with that beautiful after-glow that follows the sunsets at Suakim when the trenches were being covered up, shutting for ever from view the remains of our poor comrades who had fought so well and done their duty in so poor a cause.

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CHAPTER VIII.

ADMIRAL HEWETT'S MISSION.

THERE was no chance of an attack that night, as the enemy was entirely demoralized after the awful slaughter, and had shown no signs of fight after his retreat from the rough ground on the other side of Khor Ghob. The night in the zareba was quiet, and everyone seemed tired after the day's hard work. The only sound soon after sunset was from the horses and animals, and they were not nearly so noisy as the night before. We had a very quiet dinner at headquarter staff, and after it was over sat up and talked over the fight of the day. Many were the ideas as to the number of the enemy killed, and no one put it down under 2,500. I estimated it at more, as I knew what a terrible amount of vitality the Soudanie has, and that he is the same as the wild beasts of his country—goes away with a wound that a European would be *hors de combat* with at once, dying, perhaps, miles away from the spot on which he was hit. Thirteen hundred odd dead bodies had been counted round General Buller's square alone, and it was nearly impossible to say how many round General Davis's, as they were so heaped together. Those bodies in the

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thick bush had not been counted, nor those on the opposite side of the Khor, of which there were many. The attacking number was also variously estimated, and no one could agree to a thousand or two.

The cause of the great loss to No. 2 Brigade was variously accounted for, and I don't suppose that people will ever agree how and why it happened. It looked to me like holding our enemy a little too cheap, but still I believe had the square been halted, and all formed up within 200 yards of the Khor, it would still have been broken by the enemy's rush, as the twenty-four seconds that it would take them to have covered that ground would not have given time to have shot down those that were attacking, and they would still have made good their charge home. One thing I am certain of, that the left of the enemy that attacked General Buller's Brigade had seen the square broken, and the transport streaming away to Suakim; and then, what with the dust and smoke, could not see how the battle was going. Putting the two together, square broken and to them what looked like a flight towards Suakim, they came on to try and do the same to the other square, and failed, simply because they had further to run and more open ground to go over, and stood really no chance of doing what they did with the 2nd Brigade. Had they been better led, and could have seen what was going on, had taken ground to the right under cover of the Khor and gone to the aid of those attacking No. 2 Brigade, thus making a second attack on it, the result to the English would have been most disastrous, as neither the cavalry nor the 1st Brigade could have fired into the confused mass of friend and foe, fighting hand to hand, and the distance that the Arabs would have had to cover was so

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short that the flanking fire would not have had long enough time to tell.

There were many of the Amarars, some Bishareen, and other tribesmen, who, when they saw the defeat of the left of the Arabs' force, made off, and took no part in the battle at all, which they might have done had the 2nd Brigade been annihilated, and at one time it looked like it. There was but one opinion as to the behaviour of the troops, which was magnificent; the cool and collected manner in which the 1st Brigade was handled, just as if it was on parade, was only equalled by the plucky way in which the 2nd Brigade extricated themselves from the terrible confusion they had been drawn into, and forming up so soon on the companies of marines that had not been broken. The marines being from so many ships, and some of them having seen so little of their officers, made it more remarkable, and it only shows what splendid men they are. Had they been young troops instead of veterans they never would have been able to perform what they did.

I think we all slept soundly. I laid down with perfect comfort, knowing there was no chance of being disturbed, and slept well till nearly daylight. I woke up once in the night and heard the native women wailing for their dead; poor creatures, they returned at night to bury the bodies of their friends and relations, and a bitter sight it must have been, and hard work by moonlight for them to recognize their belongings among the hundreds of corpses that covered the desert.

Not a shot was fired during the night, and only one or two in the early morning, one shot, curiously enough, about breakfast time striking a man of the 60th who had gone outside the zareba, but where the shot came from no one

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could say. Major Turner had to give some of his Egyptian transport followers the whip for running away the day before. They had bolted from the zareba with their camels just before the attack on the zareba took place, and his black sergeant thrashed them right well. The camel saddles also were nearly all missing, which did not so much matter, as the two whole days' stay at this place had got rid of a lot of provisions, and there was not much to carry back, as the water, the great item, was not wanted, only enough for the return to Suakim.

The spies reported nearly the whole of Tamaai as having deserted, and the chances of fighting *nil*. I did not go with the troops to Tamaai and Osman Digna's headquarters, but remained behind in the zareba and took a last look round the battle field, and walked up to Teselah Hill to see the troops advance on Tamaai. We found near the hill several dead Arabs, who had evidently got away from the field wounded, and died in the bush. The battle field looked horrid, and the very sand grouse did not like settling, but wheeled round in large packs calling "gutta, gutta," by which name they are known by the Hedjazean Arabs on the opposite side of the sea. The vultures were all over the battle field in thousands, evidently having come from far and near to partake of the now not to them unusual feast. There were hundreds of the turkey buzzard, white and brown vultures, and big ones with the bare neck, only much larger than the turkey buzzard; they were in all stages of being gorged, some of them could hardly fly from the corpses, being so glutted with their meal. They are filthy birds at all times, and now looked perfectly loathsome with their wings spread out, and beaks open and panting for breath. The field later

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on in the day began to get very offensive, and I was glad to get away. The troops burnt the whole of the mat huts in the villages, which flared merrily, and destroyed nearly all the ammunition and things that had been taken from the Egyptians.

In the "Common House," that is, the store in which all the things are kept for the Mahdi's cause, a good deal of loot, such as arms and native household work, was found, and one of the 75th curiously enough got the sporting Martini-Henry rifle and gun-case that I had lent to Tewfik Bey, and that had been taken from him when he was killed at Singat. I gave the private of the 75th a good present for it, as I believe by the usages of war I could not claim it, and I was only too glad to get it back again. The gun case was covered with blood, most likely poor Tewfik Bey's.

The rebels made no stand while their place was being burnt, and contented themselves with exchanging long shots with the mounted infantry, and there was no doubt they were perfectly demoralized; and could a force of friendly natives or Abyssinians and frontiersmen have been got together to follow the victory up there would have been a certainty of capturing Osman Digna and the chief persons of Eastern Soudan Mahdism. It was another case of too late; everything seems to be too late with regard to the Soudan. It was too late to prevent Hicks Pasha leaving with his army from Khartoum; too late to make the Suakim and Berber railway when it was decided on; too late for Suleiman Pasha Niazi to try pacific means with the tribes; too late sending Baker Pasha to take over affairs; too late to relieve Tokar; too late to relieve Singat, and too late to think of getting together a force to catch

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Osman Digna after the English troops had beaten the tribesmen.

I don't know if Tommy Atkins was intended to run up the hills after the natives, but anyone who knew anything about the Soudan would have told the authorities that he could not do so, and it was very difficult to move him at any pace through this shrub-covered country. An Arab of this country can easily cover in two hours what Tommy Atkins has a great deal of trouble in doing in a day, and if the Arabs had not come to be killed Tommy Atkins would never have been able to catch them or make them give battle. The burning of Tamaai could be seen for miles round, and as soon as General Graham returned I was told by him to go back to Suakim, as it was not known what was to be done.

I accordingly started back with Major Turner and his black sergeant. Major Turner wanted very much to get a shot at a gazelle or two on the way, so I said I would show him as many as he wanted. I took him through the thick bush past Teselah and Tofrick, leaving Baker's zareba two miles nearer the sea. As the country was so disturbed, the gazelle were all on the move, and although he ought to have killed, as he had two very easy shots, he got nothing. The only bustard we saw was put up by the only native we met before Major Turner could make good his stalk, and then, being disgusted with his luck, and to show me that he could shoot with a rifle as well as with a shot-gun, he aimed at an eagle about 120 yards off and knocked it over. I was perfectly satisfied that if he could kill an eagle flying that he could also kill a gazelle. I don't wonder, however, at the best man missing a shot or two after what we had all just gone

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through, especially at the Dorcas gazelle, which are the hardest of all game to bag. A sportsman who is good at these is good at the larger kinds.

I was glad to get back to Suakim and get a warm bath, as I had had very little washing since the morning of the 11th, and one gets very dirty in the desert. I found my house pretty full, and now the ladies had gone it was quite a bachelor's establishment again, and divans, sofas, and sometimes the tables were occupied every night. The wounded came in on the morning of the 15th, having spent the night at Baker's zareba, and they were immediately shipped off for Suez. The military were occupied in making little expeditions to Handub, Hasheem, etc., but they came across very few Arabs.

The northern sheiks again began sending in supplies of sheep and cattle, and everything seemed to be settling down quietly, but there was still no policy, and no one knew if a force was to be sent to Berber or not. If it had been decided quickly to have done so there is no reason why a force of mounted men should not have gone, and the Arab horses on which the cavalry were mounted could have done the distances between the wells without much fatigue. Had a force, say, of only 500 men been sent to Berber, it would have had a most pacifying effect on the whole country, and would have won over all the wavering Arabs. Being often in the Intelligence Department, and often asked my opinion, I could see what was going on, and I must say I do not blame the local authorities, but those at home. Had General Graham been left to do what he considered was the best, there can be no doubt that he would have let General Stewart go across the desert, but being tied to London by the wretched telegraph wire, the policy, if any,

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and all instructions were issued from there, and any decision that Admiral Hewett and General Graham might have come to had to be confirmed before they could take action. Had an advance been made on Berber by the cavalry they might have been back again by the first week in May; and by travelling by night, or in the evenings and early mornings, the desert heat would not have been so very trying. The only place where there was a chance of any opposition *en route* was at Kokreb, which was not likely to be of serious nature, as the Amarars would have helped the expedition with men, and some of the Hadendowie sheiks had already come in, and the Hamdab Hadendowies would not have acted by themselves. A force once going to Berber, and returning after a few days' sojourn there, would have shown the inhabitants of the Nile that it was possible, if they did not help General Gordon in Khartoum, to have the English down on them, and it would have restored confidence and brought the tribes together. El Teb and Tamaai are far away from the Nile Valley, and although the news of the Arabs' defeats at those places had reached there, it was not patent to the inhabitants that the same soldiers that had fought those battles could go to the Nile across the desert.

I heard a good deal of what the Arab sheiks had to say, and had any definite proposition been put to them I think that they would have been of great deal more help than they were. No one could look further than abandonment, and after that everything was a blank. From what we heard of General Gordon he had given up nearly all idea of a pacific solution of the question, and his power was greatly broken by the policy. The same reason of failure in his Abyssinian mission now took place in the Soudan.

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In the former he went to King John not as Governor-General of the Soudan, but as its late ruler; it was known he was to have nothing further to do with it, and what he promised would not for certain be carried out by his Moslem successors, and King John knew, through the foreign Consuls, that the Egyptians could not make war on him again. In the Soudan there was abandonment of the country by Egypt—that is, the Egyptians wanted to get out of the country, either by pacific means or fight their way out. The tribesmen, by allowing and helping the Egyptians to get out of the country, made enemies of the Mahdi and his followers; by their remaining indifferent they could answer the Mahdi when called upon for explanations, and so shield themselves. There was no question of the Egyptians again coming to conquer the country and put down the Mahdi, so the tribes thought that Mahdism was likely to be the strongest power, and as all Orientals, would do nothing against what was to them likely to be the rising power.

Had they been told simply this: We will give you our word that if you help us we will destroy the Mahdi's power and aid you to govern yourselves and will open trade with you, whereby you can make money; you may put up as many water wheels as you like and they shall not be taxed; only put a stop to Mahdism; nearly the whole of the Soudan would have joined the English, as they still believed in the word of Englishmen and knew that they had no chance in a fight against them. The very fact of the tribesmen bringing their cattle down to the vicinity of Suakim and re-erecting their mat huts outside the town at Sharter and other places, showed their confidence in the English, and if the tribes had now the offer of a reward for the capture of Osman Digna, or had

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been paid to join in an expedition composed of English mounted infantry and camel corps, there can be no doubt that the Eastern Soudan troubles would have been finished, and not only General Gordon's position at Khartoum made secure, but materially strengthened now that he had to abandon a pacific policy. Withdrawing the expedition so quickly and not telling the chiefs what was the ultimate aim of the Government had a bad effect. It would have been far better to have had someone whom the natives could have looked up to, and I believe that if Seyed Morghani had been put forward as our representative to take the government of the Soudan after the Egyptians had left, nearly all the tribes would have been satisfied. The only really sensible action of the authorities at Cairo was to prevent Zebehr Pasha from going to the Soudan, as he would hereafter become a more formidable opponent than the Mahdi, and armed as his followers would have been with arms of precision, he would have been a more dangerous neighbour than Mahomed Achmed, and would have, unless the European Powers had smashed him, become virtual ruler of Egypt.

I was now busy with the details of the Admiral's mission to Abyssinia, and we had hard work getting everything together. I was much amused with the sample box made on board the flagship to carry provisions and luggage in. A camel might have carried a pair of them, a mule certainly not, and he would never have been able to get through the bushes and up the passes with a pair of empties, let alone full ones. Between us we invented a box which carried about 70lbs., and a pair would fit a commissariat pack saddle very nicely. They had all their edges taken off and the corners rounded down so as not to chafe or hurt the animals when they came into collision, which they often do

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on a mountain path, and Colyer, the Admiral's steward, who had charge of the food department, managed everything very well. All his boxes were numbered, and he kept a reference book in his pocket, by which he could tell exactly what was in them. It took a great deal of packing and altering before even weights could be got together in each box, and then to arrange them as nearly as possible to an estimated daily consumption. With such boxes as contained biscuits, preserved meats, and liquor, it was, of course, easy to arrange weights, as two boxes were kept in use instead of one.

I shall never forget the Admiral sending for me into his cabin the first day I went through the gear that Colyer had got together for the mission, when I said I did not think it was enough and that we ought to have two months' provisions with us and another month's in reserve, so as to be all ready in case of need. Colyer, who was in with the Admiral, smiled when I said I thought we were all going to live too well. After I had a talk and explained everything, the Admiral said to Colyer, "I am too busy to look into these things; you have to do the catering, mind; I shall come down on you if we are short and have to go on half-rations." So everything was left to Colyer. I had no idea that there was going to be so many of us with the Admiral, and there was no doubt that what with the presents to King John, Ras Aloula, and the other chiefs, the provisions, tents, camp equipage, and personal luggage, we should be quite a small army, and it wanted a good many to look after the things and to take charge of the gear *en route*, especially through a country of which very little was known.

The mission was to consist of Admiral Hewett, his late flag commander Rolfe, now promoted to Captain after the

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battle of Tamaai; Flag-Lieut. Graham, promoted to Commander for services in the field with the Naval Brigade; Assistant-Paymaster Smith to do secretary's work; Dr. Gimlette as surgeon; Mr. Todd the chaplain—I suppose to bury anyone that died—the parson was a jolly fellow, and a good sportsman; Lieutenants Paris and Fitzgerald, all from H.M.S. *Euryalus;* Commander Crowe, of H.M.S. *Coquette,* who had all the tedious work to do at Massowah, and had nothing to do with any of the fighting; Captain Speedy, who had been such a long time in Southern and Central Abyssinia, and had belonged to the 1868 Expedition to Magdala; Mason Bey, the Egyptian delegate; Lieut. Kennedy, of the 42nd, in charge of the transport animals; Mr. Villiers, the artist of the *Graphic,* and myself; eight European servants, including Colyer, two Goanese cooks, Peter Bru, an Abyssinian interpreter, and his son; a lot of native servants, mule drivers, carriers, and Bashi Bazouks; in all nearly 150 men, and as yet an unknown number of mules for riding and transport work; a rather large mission, and certainly King John or the Abyssinians had never seen anything of the sort before.

They had seen the English army in 1868, but not a mission of peace of such a large description. Before we were ready to start for Massowah nearly all the regiments had left, and our time was taken up in saying good-bye and shipping off the troops, who seemed to melt away in no time, indeed, the big camp which covered all the southern part of the harbour soon dwindled down to small dimensions. I was sorry to see the last of General Graham and his staff, as they had all been very kind to me, and treated me as one of themselves, which was good of them considering I was a civilian. I found Colonel Ardagh, R.E.,

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of the Intelligence Department, a particularly nice man to deal with, so very courteous, and he took such pains to sift all the information brought him; all the natives brought into communication with him were very pleased with the way in which they were treated. Colonel Hallam Parr, of the Egyptian army, who was acting as Commandant of the town, I also got on very well with.

I am afraid (although I was intended for a soldier) that I am too old ever to make an obedient officer, and I used to question some of the things that I was told to do, not that I refused to obey instructions, but if I thought that they were not quite the thing I used to say so, and I am afraid sometimes I was spoilt, and got my own way. I never expressed an opinion on a subject I was not thoroughly up in, and if I was questioned I generally had my reasons and evidence at my finger ends, so that I was seldom contradicted, and hardly ever at fault. I wish others at home had known their work and what they were about when they expressed opinions on subjects they knew nothing about, and tried to graft European ideas on native stocks and expect them to flourish. I think General Graham had completely grasped how hopeless it was ever to get English soldiers to corner the Eastern Soudanies, who fight when they like and never can be brought to bay unless it be by a good dromedary corps, which takes a long time to get in perfect working order.

The natives of Suakim were extremely sorry to lose Admiral Hewett on his departure to Massowah; he had endeared himself to all, and he was most popular with every one of the community. Even the Jeddah Arabs, who are as a rule most fanatical in some things, respected him, as they saw the great amount of good he had done. All deserving

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officials had had their salaries raised, and they could now live on their pay without having to resort to bribes; consequently they did better work, as their hearts were in it. Not an Egyptian official was kept on when his post could be filled by a Soudan Arab, and the townspeople began to understand what abandonment meant; saw that there was a chance of promotion if they did well, and that they were not to be at the beck and call of every new Egyptian official sent down from Cairo to be got rid of.

There is no doubt that there is native talent to be got in the Soudan, and it can be utilized for nearly every department, and under good European heads of departments living on the spot and not in Cairo, the Soudan could be governed for the Khedive, who never was in any way in fault for what had been done. A more honest, straightforward gentleman than Mahomed Tewfik the Khedive of Egypt never occupied any Moslem throne; and if his servants the Pashas had only been like him poor Egypt and the fellaheen would not have suffered as they have done. I was quite surprised that the natives should have taken so much to heart Admiral Hewett's departure, and I think he felt that they had loyally supported him in his endeavours to set matters right. One and all of us, native and European, felt that by his departure we had lost a personal friend who had studied our welfare.

The lesson that General Graham's expedition had taught the natives was that an Englishman could fight, was not the same as an Egyptian, and that he paid handsomely for everything he required; he took nothing by force, and treated a black man in a proper manner. Nine-tenths of the Arabs, after having had dealings with Englishmen, would have only been too glad to have been under their

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rule; and if England had boldly said "We will protect the Soudan coast," the natives would have been contented, and would soon have brought in the leaders of the Eastern rebellion, which would have strengthened Gordon's position to a very great extent. We should have found the Soudan natives much easier governed than the Somalis, and a much richer country to administer; but no one seems to care about the place, and what was going to be done no one knew. The Admiral certainly did not, nor the Intelligence Department, nor General Graham, nor the Egyptian officials, nor the English Consul, nor, most likely, the Government at home, who, I suppose, thought the question would settle itself sooner or later. How General Gordon was going to get on was the great question, now the Berber road was not to be opened; his position was a sort of sandwich—a layer of rebels and then a layer of friendlies round the Nile, and then another layer of rebels, he and his party being the seasoning.

The flagship, with the Admiral on board, got away before I did for Massowah. I was to come on last with the mules by the Egyptian mail-boat *Zagazig*. I had taken the precaution of getting permission to send down 50 extra transport mules with their pack saddles, as I was certain everything had been under-estimated, and there was no chance of our being able to pick up such good beasts as those belonging to the Government. Pack saddles cannot be got in Massowah, at least, not fit to carry boxes on, although they do very well for packages and bags. One of our transport mules will carry just about twice as much as an Abyssinian mule; besides, he looks a great deal more aristocratic—got up with a nice headstall and saddle—than a country mule does with his old saddle made of rags,

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tied together with cords, and fastened on with old bits of hide. The big Spanish mules, as a rule, are brutes to ship, but ours seemed to be getting accustomed to it, as they have had enough of it lately; this is the fifth time within the last six weeks that they have been up and down a steamer's side. I always stand quite clear when they are being shipped or landed, as I have seen so many accidents. During the time General Hicks was going up country I saw a Turkish Bashi Bazouk killed by a mule which kicked him in the chest. The man never moved after he fell. I don't know what part of the body was injured, as the officer who was in command just put the poor fellow into a cart and sent him off to be buried.

I went to say good-bye before leaving to our new Governor-General, Sir Cromer Ashburnham, who had taken over from Admiral Hewett. Well may the 60th be proud of their old Colonel, who would not go on the sick-list for a broken arm, from an accident which he met with in Cairo, and came down with his regiment and went through the whole of the Suakim campaign. It took the Arabs greatly when they were told why the new Governor-General had his arm in a sling, and one of my native friends said, "Wallah, he is not an Angooda." The latter word is one of reproach that they use towards the Egyptians.

I was not at all sorry to get away to sea again, and to different business, as during the last month I had hardly a good night's rest, what with public work and my own private affairs to look after, and I had quite enough to do, and I am sorry to say I had to very much neglect the latter for the former. Campaigns don't come every year, thank goodness, and Brewster and myself being the only two Englishmen in the town who knew anything about the

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place we had all our work cut out for us. As far as I was concerned I did all that I could, and as my staff had either been killed or gone away, I had but little help. With Brewster it was different, he had a Government staff under him that he had highly organized and was in splendid working order—the Suakim Custom House was a model establishment, and did its work well and to the great satisfaction of all the merchants, and now that the exports had all fallen off there were only the imports to do, and he could spare his staff to give others a helping hand. No one worked harder than Brewster did, and he was most highly spoken of and recommended by all the heads of departments from the Admiral and General Graham downwards; but there his remuneration ended, and considering what he had done compared to what others in Egypt had during the 1882 expedition, we all thought that the English Government would have recognized his services the same as they did those. Without influence, it seems hard to mount the ladder, no matter what services may be rendered.

After an uneventful voyage to Massowah I arrived with all the remaining mules and their drivers in good order, and was immediately ordered to have the animals put with the others in the mule lines on the centre island between the palace and the fort that commands the causeway from the mainland. I found on arrival that some of the expedition and gear had already started for Sahaati, and that we were to follow on next day. This did not give me over much time to do what I wanted, and besides I had a good bit of work to get through with Colyer about transport; and now that I had brought down the fifty extra mules, a good deal of stuff that would have had to follow us up country, with no certainty when it would arrive, could now go on with us,

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and be under the supervision of the mission, which eventually saved us a lot of trouble. I had a few more things to find out and clear up regarding Debbub's robberies with the Government and some business to transact with old Abdullah Ghoul Bey, the leading character at Massowah.

I have not described this old gentleman, who is well known to all who have ever been to Massowah. His career has been a curious one, and rather similar to that of Chinowie Bey at Suakim. The former, however, is just as open and free-hearted and as good company as the latter is reserved, parsimonious, and fanatical. Abdullah Ghoul started life as a cooly or porter in Jeddah. After saving a little money he bought a few boats that plied for hire in Jeddah harbour, and, I am sorry to say, went over to the opposite coast for black and brown ivory, from which he made more money and prospered. His great trading ground used to be Massowah and Tajurrah; at the latter place he became acquainted with an Arab named Hassan, who is now cavass at the English Consulate at Jeddah. When at Tajurrah he was in the employ of the French at Obock. These two ran slaves together, and it was from Hassan that on my first visit to Massowah I heard of Abdullah Ghoul, who owed him money. On my first visit I handed him a letter from Hassan, who claimed a balance of an account, and I first heard that it was for slave business. Old Abdullah Ghoul made no secret of it, told me all about the transactions, and was very straightforward over everything, and I took a great liking to him from the first, and I always found him what may be called an enlightened and progressive Moslem.

During the English campaign of 1868 he made a good deal of money, and increased his riches during the two Egyptian campaigns against King John. His house is by far the

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largest in Massowah, and is situated alongside the Custom House in the best commercial centre in the town. Abdullah Ghoul is very hospitable and always entertaining, and gives picnics and nautches at his country house, which is situated half way between the causeway and Hotumloo. At noon time, and again in the evening, all the principal officials and merchants of the town visit him, and his house is the recognized meeting-place at Massowah. He is the agent for the fortnightly line of Egyptian mail steamers that run from Suez to Aden and back, touching at the Red Sea ports, and besides is the largest exporter and importer of produce in the town.

His position, therefore, is a good one, and he can be taken as an authority of what is really required by the natives, and how abandonment affects Massowah. As far as the natives are concerned, they cannot understand it, and had the notice been given out to them in any other way they might have grasped what was meant; now they cannot. Speaking in a merchant's point of view, he thought that it would be a good thing, as it would increase the trade with the Abyssinians, and that they still would be able to trade with the Soudan through that country; that what Massowah gained, Suakim lost; that there was no comparison between the two, as the flank of the former was always protected; that the hill tribes would never show the enthusiasm for the Mahdi's cause as those of the plains had done; that there was, therefore, always a certain trade to be carried on; that as far as the townspeople were concerned they did not mind what Government they were under as long as commerce was fostered; and that they were willing to cry "Long live the Sultan or any other Queen or King."

I perfectly agree with Abdullah Ghoul that the position

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at Massowah is entirely different from that at Suakim, that they should not be treated the same, and that an enormous trade, quite a new one, is likely to spring up with Abyssinia, which has never had a chance to develop itself on account of so many years of disturbance, and with Abyssinia now united under King John, the inhabitants will have more chance of collecting the various valuable products of their country in exchange for Manchester goods and other barter; that before Theodore's disturbances there was a much larger trade than ever there has been since, and that the Egyptian authorities have been responsible for all the ill-feeling that has been going on; that Munzinger started it with his intrigues against King John, and his successors all more or less have fostered the same. Abdullah Ghoul had never any cause to complain of the natives of the interior, and he had always been friendly with them.

Take Chinowie Bey as one of the leading merchants at Suakim. He was all for the Sultan, never spoke to a Christian unless he was saying his prayers and telling his beads, is a usurer of the worst description, and obtained nearly all his property at Suakim by foreclosing mortgages, lending the money at enormously high rates of interest. Not a native speaks well of him, and if Osman Digna, with whom he had quarrelled, could only get hold of him he would take it out of him in more ways than one. There are many other natives in the Soudan that would like to catch this gentleman outside the town in the desert to settle old scores. He is agent for the Egyptian mail steamers, head of the Chamber of Commerce, a post that Ali Digna, Osman Digna's first cousin, formerly held. He is just as much a foreigner to the Soudan as any European, and he was the

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most important personage in the place, as all the Egyptian officials, with the exception of Tewfik Bey, Aliedeen Pasha, and Raschid Pasha, backed him up in everything. The latter wanted to get him out of the place and break his power, but got upset himself in trying to. The Roweyah salt fields were for many years worked by him, and there is not one mark of utility left behind there. Had it been in European hands it would have been entirely different and a thriving place.

I mention these two persons to show that even the Arabs of the interior have some cause for complaint or some cause for liking the inhabitants of the towns, and that there are a good many natives who would be only too glad to upset the Egyptian Government simply to wipe off old scores with the resident Arabian merchants, as they have been so badly treated by them. In the case of Abdullah Ghoul he could get news through the rebels and from the people with them, while Chinowie Bey could not, and had the English not come to Suakim he would have been obliged to go away to spend the last of his days in Mecca. The merchants of what may be termed these two schools are entirely different; the one cannot get on without the Egyptian Government, as if things were changed, and the old system of trade broken down—which it must be sooner or later—their occupation would cease to exist, and they would only have the slave dealers to do business with; while the other would always be formidable opponents to European houses if they chose to compete, as they live so much cheaper and have not so many expenses. If they worked amicably with the Europeans, which is most likely, they would greatly increase their own business and be valuable associates in helping to develop the resources of the country.

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I have found in my experience of the Soudan that if an old established Arab house speaks well of the Europeans to the natives of the interior it removes their prejudices to a great extent, and they become friendly at once, while others who are fanatical, and tell the natives—who have, perhaps, seldom or never seen a European—to have nothing to do with the unbelievers, do a great deal of harm; and the natives will not have anything to do with them, believing it to be better to sell to a Mahomedan at a lower figure than have any dealings whatever with a European. The only places in the Soudan where natives have anything to do with the Europeans are at Khartoum, Berber, Cassala, Massowah, and Suakim, and it has been the policy of the Egyptians to keep Europeans completely out of the other markets of the country.

The feeling at Massowah regarding Admiral Hewett's mission was that it was certain of success. The merchants were delighted, as they looked for increased trade and a final settlement once and for all of the Abyssinian question, which had been for so many years always changing, and depending entirely on the caprices of the Governor for the time in charge of Massowah. The tobacco planters at Sanheit were, of course, anxious as to whether King John would allow them to grow tobacco after Sanheit had been returned to him. He detests smoking and snuff and chewing as being Mahomedan vices, and has utterly forbidden his subjects to smoke or use snuff. This, of course, he cannot prevent them doing when away from his presence any more than he can stop them eating or drinking. There have been some absurd stories told of his ordering anyone found smoking or chewing to have their lips and nose cut off; these reports have been spread by his enemies for

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interested motives. I have never seen or heard of a mutilated person for this offence, and I don't believe it to be true. I have heard of persons being severely beaten for spitting out tobacco that they were using on the King's premises, and I dare say any anti-tobacco person would be angry if a stranger, or a friend even, smoked and chewed in his house. The Sanheit tobacco is not bad, and a good deal might be grown there for exportation and for consumption in the Soudan. Coffee also grows well at Sanheit, taking the plants I saw in the Government garden as specimens.

The day of my departure I lunched with Ali Bey, the Collector of Customs, as I wanted to get some information from him, and on parting he presented me with a basket of little things for the journey which he had had packed. They consisted of some good Mocha coffee, preserved apricot, a box of caviare, and other odds and ends. Ali Bey used to be well known to many of the English who used to come shooting in the Soudan; he was then agent for the Egyptian mail boats at Suakim, and was always kind and hospitable to everyone. He and poor Aliedeen Pasha were very good on the sad occasion when the unfortunate Lord Ranfurly died at Suakim. I left Ali Bey to go and finish packing and loading my mules, while he mounted his donkey and went off to the Palace to ride out part of the way with Admiral Hewett, who was leaving at 4 p.m. for up country.

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WITH ADMIRAL SIR W. HEWETT'S MISSION TO ABYSSINIA.

CHAPTER IX.

SAHAATI.

My packing finished, my mules loaded, I saw my servants on the road to Sahaati at 5 p.m., and went to the Palace in case anything had been left behind. Upstairs I found a number of empty boxes, odds and ends, and litter of all sorts—incomplete saddles, packs, &c., strewn about. Perched on the *débris* a carpenter and some sailors of the *Euryalus* were enjoying their pipes after a couple of hard days' work, having done hundreds of small jobs which sailors, and sailors only, seem capable of performing over and above their ordinary work. The blue-jacket seems able to turn to any useful job ashore or afloat where a soldier would be helpless. On my way down stairs I annexed a pair of stirrup leathers and some pack straps—useful things, and not to be got up country.

I then mounted my animal and rode off to the mule lines to see how many of the extra 50 mules I had brought down had been left behind. I found eleven left. Such are the pre-

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cautions necessary in these lands! Standing disconsolate, but ready to start with the mules, was Achmed, the Bashi Bazouk, who had been with me on many expeditions before. He really looked so down-hearted that I asked him what was the matter; and he replied that he was forbidden to go by the Bullok basha, and could I help him. Achmed, perhaps, had not been willing to be bled like his fellow companions, and as I knew his worth, especially as a good all-round sportsman, and one to whom no day was too long, I thought I could arrange for his accompanying us. I made him fasten the mules together on one set of picketing lines, as they were very scattered, and then it struck me that as there were two sets of picketing lines left, that we should be short of them on the march, I told him to take two more mules, load up another set of picketing lines and pegs, and follow on.

It was half-past six when I got to the end of the causeway, fully an hour and a half after the last mule had left. There I met the officials and Europeans, Arabs and merchants, returning to Massowah who had accompanied the Admiral on his departure. It is customary at Massowah whenever a Pasha or a "big swell" leaves the town for up-country for the chief inhabitants to turn out and wish him *bon voyage* and to see him the first few miles on his journey. On this occasion it was a big, or an "Atlantic" swell with several of minor importance who were rolling up country, the smallest one of the number being enough to turn some few of the inhabitants out. Indeed, never in the annals of Massowah had such a sight been known as this mission.

With adieus in many tongues from the different nationalities, and with the Arab "God speed you" in my ears, I turned my face landwards and hurried after the main

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body of the mission. I was not long in catching up my own mules and servants, and as I did so passed my eye over the packs on one side. I pulled up and crossed so as to let the mules pass me on the other side, in order to see if the packs were on right, and all being safe and the mules travelling comfortably I went on perfectly satisfied that my gear would not be the last in camp although it was last in starting. Half way between the villages of Hotumloo and Macoullov I encountered the most important personage in the mission after the Admiral, viz., Colyer, the Admiral's steward (the Spiers and Pond of the expedition); he was with William, the Admiral's servant. One or two of their packs had slipped, but they had, with the aid of the muleteers, got everything ship-shape and were making good weather of it, the only unhappy personage being the Admiral's little fox-terrier, who looked as if she would much rather have been on foot than jolting about in a pannier. Little "Missy" turned out a great favourite, and was a source of much amusement during the time we remained at Adowa. She also managed *en route* to get some sport, in the shape of rats, mice, and an occasional leveret, and made a fair bag, which did not befall some of the sportsmen on the mission. Through Macoullov village the path on each side was lined with people who greeted us as we passed. The Abyssinian Christian contingent, especially the female portion, was particularly well represented, and perhaps even more interested in the English than in saying good-bye to their sweethearts, the mule drivers and Bashi Bazouks, who, as a rule, are soon forgotten if their absence is a long one, despite the moral example set them by the Swedish mission, which is located in sight of their huts.

On leaving Macoullov I came upon sundry mules with their

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packs shifted, and found reloading and rearranging going on. I remained till I saw them under weigh again, and just as another start was made the Admiral's Flag-Lieutenant (Graham) came galloping back to find out where the Admiral's servants had gone to. I reported them as all well, and at that moment they came in sight, so Graham and I went on to join the main body. We caught them up just as it was getting dark, about half way on our march to Sahaati. The moon was now up, and we all moved on as quickly as possible that we might get a good night's rest.

We encountered little of interest *en route*, except the place where Mr. Debbub and his outlaws had attacked an Abyssinian caravan and killed the priest some five months before. The grave was still open; the heap of stones had increased in size, as well as the mound to mark the place where he fell. The latter will, in process of time, most likely become the bigger of the two, for the place of sepulchre will soon be unknown. Another mile and a half brought us in sight of camp, with its numerous fires, the tents having preceded us the night before. They were pitched and ready for us, and the whole aspect of our resting-place was cheerful, the bright moonlight lending a picturesque look to the high rocks that surround the small valley of Sahaati with its pools of water. We arrived at nine p.m., having taken barely three hours to do the seventeen miles. Cold supper and a peg and I turned in, and was soon asleep, notwithstanding the chorus of frogs which always makes Sahaati a musical camping ground. I was awakened once or twice by mules stumbling over the tent ropes, and it was not till past eleven o'clock that the last arrivals got into camp. They soon settled down, and all was as quiet as could be expected for a first night's march.

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At four o'clock next morning those who had the transport part of the expedition to look after were up, getting mules saddled, tents down, and everything packed, and at about half-past five the Admiral came out of his tent and a little before six got away *en route* to Ailet, about nine miles off. At half-past six the last mule was loaded, and Sahaati was again deserted, except by a few Bashi Bazouks, who were to return to Massowah, and a few Arabs with their flocks of goats. On the rocks above, the inhabitants of Sahaati, the monkeys, were waiting to come down for their morning drink, the old gentlemen with their big manes only being in sight, except when an occasional inquisitive child monkey advanced slightly in front round some of the rocks to have a last look at the unusual sight; but a deep call from one of the old men soon sent the "little devil" out of sight.

I remained behind to get a few sand grouse, thousands of which come down to water every morning and evening. If one cares to take family shots at the poor "birdies" on the ground while drinking it is no exaggeration in saying one might kill hundreds in a few hours, but the best sport is to go about 150 yards from the water and fire at them, which is the same as if they were driven towards a mantlet on the moors. I killed six brace in about twenty minutes, missing my first five shots, not having had much practice for about seven months. Having got together these small contributions to the pot (certainly my share), I gave my gun to my gun-bearer, Mahomed Shohoie, walked up the small pass, the first steep step on the road to the Abyssinian highlands, and as soon as I got on level ground started at a smart canter to try my mule's speed. I knew the animal by sight during General Graham's ex-

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pedition, and I had had him tried by a native before I shipped him, but I did not know that I possessed such a good beast as he eventually turned out to be.

Mahomed kept up with me for the first two miles, and then came the usual excuse, "Stop, I have a thorn in my foot." When a native says he has a thorn in his foot it does not mean an ordinary thorn, but one a good half-inch long. I stopped. "Are you very lame, Mahomed? Is it a big thorn?" The usual "No, not very big," producing the nearest stick that he could put his hand on, at the same time looking me in the face with his only eye to see if I really believed that he was hurt. He saw at once that it was no go, and was up again and before me on the path, and making his own pace for another ten minutes. Another dead stop; his right hand was on the mule's rein, in his left my gun was ready for me to take as soon as I had dismounted. "Francolin," he said, and pointed with his finger. About 80 yards ahead, on the bank of a nullah, four or five birds were feeding. A bush, about thirty yards off, gave me cover, and of this I availed myself. On my going round it a hen bird gave me a running shot. I bowled her over (always take a francolin running if you are shooting for the pot), and with the other barrel, when the birds rose, I got another, which fell in a thick bush, but which Mahomed retrieved. How I should like to have had half-an-hour along this nullah, as it is a grand bit of shooting ground, plenty of hares, dig-dig gazelle, francolin, and guinea-fowl in the bushes on each side, and an easy bit of ground to shoot over, the bushes being "just thick enough, but not too thick!" Mahomed wanted me to remain and shoot, as he is fond of "chicken" and "dig-dig," but I explained the awful consequences that would accrue if I

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were late in camp. So on we went, and were soon up with some of the officers.

Over the second pass, from the top of which there is the pretty view of the Ailet plain, stretching east and west from Assus to the hills adjoining the Agumbessa district, and then down through the shady road leading to Ailet. From the top of the pass we could see Ailet village, and some of our tents already up. Game on all sides—guinea-fowl calling, and the half-crow, half-call, of the francolin, not unlike the noise of the Ceylon jungle-fowl, but wanting in the marked and decided call of the latter, which once heard can never be forgotten, and recalling happy days in the East when after bigger game than is found in the coast plains of the Soudan. I came up here with our doctor, who had already caught some butterflies and bugs of different sorts, and I was sorry for him that we were passing through the country during the dry season, as after the rains he could have made a beautiful and interesting collection. Still, there was enough to keep him employed. It is a blessing to a man, and to his companions, if he has only one "mania." A sportsman, or a lover of scenery and nature, no matter where he goes, can find something to amuse and interest him. Spare me from the man who knows nothing about sport and only grumbles! I am sorry to say we had such individuals in our mission, but the majority of them were of the "right sort." Sport is important, if only from a gastronomic point of view, as there are few countries like Abyssinia where such a variety of small game can be got, most of which is delicious eating and a great help to the cook, who has something to work on besides the beef and mutton of the country.

At 8.30 a.m. I arrived at Ailet with some of the mission,

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after a most enjoyable ride in the cool morning. The Admiral was already duly installed in his tent. A council of war was held as to what should be our movements, and it was decided that we should not go on till the day after. Meantime we rearranged packs and got the presents for the King ready, to be borne by porters, as we had not enough transport to take on the heavy gear, such as cannon, shot, shell, cartridges, etc., and the bulky boxes containing the heavy presents, which were too big for the mules, could only be carried up the passes by coolies. Camp was soon pitched and everything made comfortable for a two days' rest, and by noon we were all ready for a good breakfast, and to which we all did justice. Colyer, our worthy caterer, was simply perfection, and never lost his temper the whole time although he was bothered by many a hungry person. "I say, Colyer, is breakfast ready? Do look sharp," was the usual cry with which the poor fellow was accosted before he had been off his mule ten minutes. The order as to what meals were to be served out on the march was given—hot cocoa at daylight, with cold meat, game, etc.; breakfast at noon, or as near noon as possible, to consist of, if possible, a hot breakfast, if not a cold one; and a hot dinner at sunset, or as soon after sunset as possible; rum and lime juice for all hands at noon, in man-of-war style, and a liberal supply of beer or porter per member as long as it held out. The old cook had the hardest work, I think, of anyone of the mission; he was ably backed up by the second cook, but these two Goanese gentlemen had their work cut out for them, and so had their helps. I often used to lend them a hand while chatting with the elder one and hearing his yarns and experiences of the ships he had been on and the admirals he had served. He had been on many a pic-nic before, but never one lasting so long as this.

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I always managed whenever I was late for meals to find something nice kept back for me, and I am certain the old boy used to make inquiries if I was not at table. He used to say that as I brought in most food I had the best right to eat it, and I often used to offer after a poor day's sport, if there were not enough, to go round and get more. There is nothing like keeping on good terms with the cook, and I always think how sensible men are when they marry their cooks, especially when the lady is an artiste in her way. The poor old prior was happy till his niece came, and my sympathies are, and always will be, with poor Nell, and it was very hard lines, and showed want of taste, putting her under ground when she might have done penance in a soup kitchen, or in a city restaurant, and thus expiated her crimes. After lunch the few packs that had to be rearranged were soon put in order, and those who were sportsmen started out for a long afternoon; others went off to the hot springs of Ailet for a bathe, the fashionable baths of the neighbourhood of North Abyssinia.

I had a bath at the springs, as it is supposed to be the correct thing to do, but it has its drawbacks, one among which is to bathe alongside a dark brother or sister suffering from some pronounced skin disease or some disgusting malady. The whole establishment, as at present, will have to be reorganized before it ever becomes popular; but who knows, however, when the country is opened up, whether advertisements will not appear in the papers, "A charming residence to let, situated on the hills above the fertile plains of Ailet; within easy distance of the hot springs and mineral wells for which the district is renowned. The hot springs are noted for their great healing powers, etc., etc. Persons suffering from any known disease are speedily

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cured; a list of testimonials can be had on application to the Sheik of Ailet, verified by the Cadi. With the residence goes the right of sporting over 100,000 acres of mixed shooting; the animals found consist of every description, from elephants to mice, and the birds from bustard to honey-birds. Early application is necessary. For terms apply to the agent of Osman Digna, Esq., Massowah. N.B.—Not more than two lions are allowed to be shot in a season."

I went for a stroll with the Flag-Lieutenant (Graham) in a direction that others had not taken, and we followed the Assus and Gumhod roads up for a couple of miles, and then struck off into the bush. I lent Graham my 12-bore, and I carried my sporting Martini, thinking I might get a chance at a pig, gazelle, or bustard. We saw next to nothing worth speaking about, and just before dark amused ourselves by killing close to camp a few of the ordinary plover that are such a nuisance in the Soudan, and are nearly always in the way when one is trying to get near big game, for they generally get up about forty yards in front of you and fly round in circles, following you up sometimes for 300 or 400 yards, uttering their unmusical cry, which sounds very much like, "Did you do it?" More often than not you don't do it, simply because the game you are stalking get uneasy at the cry, and make off from where they are feeding. The plover is not unlike our lapwing in size and shape, but is not nearly such a handsome bird, the plumage being a ground of white with black, with brown points and bars. The iris round the eye is red. It is found in Ceylon, India, and Egypt, and its Abyssinian ally is very much the same, but a trifle larger, less gaudy, with a yellow iris, and is a great deal less objectionable bird.

We found nearly everyone back at camp on arrival, several

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francolin, hares, and a dig-dig having been brought in, and some pig having been seen and shot at. Next morning we were early at work, arranging packs, mules, and getting the coolies off with the presents, and sorting reserve provisions from those wanted on the voyage. It saved us a long time afterwards when loading up *en route*, as the reserve provisions, as a rule, got off a good deal before the others, and cleared camp, so that tents when down and packed could be loaded without confusion. Everything was arranged by noon. Then we had lunch and a smoke, and afterwards more bathing at Ailet, and shooting.

Graham and I again went out together, he taking my gun and I my rifle. We had but poor sport, and the game was wild, and what was worst of all the foreend of my gun was lost; we had a look for it, but with no luck. I unfortunately did not follow Graham in all the turns he made, so could not tell which track he had taken. Back to camp, tired out with a hot day's work, the really excellent dinner waiting for us, and then our beds were welcome. The nights at Ailet were hot, and what with a bright moon and the dead stillness of nature, sleep was not difficult. Once or twice one awoke when a hyena came too close to the mules, as the Egyptian transport animals were not accustomed to them; but they soon became so. An Abyssinian mule has a great contempt for a hyena, and I have seen them let a hyena come quite close to their heels before making any movement; then a vigorous kick or two has sent the scavenger off. Egyptian mules are inclined at first to stampede. It is curious how like the first notes of a hyena's call are to the lion's call when the latter has his mouth near the ground and gives that peculiar low sound

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that is heard at such a distance; even a native is sometimes taken in at first by it.

Early next morning we all bade good-bye to Ailet, not sorry to get away from the heat and dust of the place, and all looking forward to pleasanter camping grounds and cooler weather. I went back with two trackers to try and find the fore-end of my gun, and after another hour and a half's search gave it up, and turned round for Sabagumba. I knew every inch of the plain, so it was not hard for me to take a bee-line across country; and in spite of the time I had spent looking for my irreparable loss I managed to get into camp before all the tents were pitched, having bagged *en route* a hare, a dig-dig, two francolin, and a guinea-fowl, at which the cook was delighted.

I found the Admiral installed under a very pleasant tree eating his breakfast, and he immediately informed me he would not go up the pass that afternoon, but first thing next morning. There is excellent water, plenty of large trees, and good grazing ground at Sabagumba, and everyone seemed delighted with the place. We had not been in camp long, and some of us had not finished breakfast, when a female kudoo was espied on the nearest hill grazing, and occasionally looking at the camp, a sight she had evidently never seen before. Our great chasseur went off after her with a native tracker, and we all sat waiting to see the animal killed. There was easy stalking ground to within eighty yards of her, and why the animal was ever missed I never could make out, as an animal as large as an Alderney cow at 100 yards' distance is not a bad mark. But missed it was, so all of us had the mortification of seeing the beast get away unharmed, after dreaming of a

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haunch of venison. Colyer had the red-currant jelly all ready, and knew which box it was in. The great chasseur was well chaffed on his return, and it was agreed that the next chance should fall to someone else.

We had a real lazy afternoon that day, and a beautifully cool bath in the little stream under the shade of the trees. Then the parson and I went out quail shooting. I knew the ground of old, and we found the first birds within thirty yards of the camp, and were never more than 400 yards away from it. I wanted the Admiral to come out and shoot, but as he was a bit stiff from his morning's ride he would only consent to look on. We managed to bag in about an hour and a half eighteen and a half brace of quail. The bag was about evenly divided; if anything, the parson having the best of it. He was a cheery man, and a good sportsman. A few francolin and a guinea-fowl or two were in the evening added to the bag, and duly handed over to the cook's department. Another glorious night, the moon lighting up the camp and its surroundings, as only the moon can do in the clear atmosphere of these regions. We were late turning in, all the new hands seemingly pleased with the change and the novelty of the scene.

We were up before daylight repacking. We had to use great care in loading the animals, as the pass up from here to Ginda is a nasty climb, and, for political reasons, the Abyssinians do not care to improve it, and it serves their purposes. I suppose they are right. Ginda was reached at 9.30 a.m. and the plain was a trifle greener than when I was last there, but was not looking so well on account of so much of the neighbouring woods having been burnt down by the jungle fires. Here we were to meet Ras Aloula's second in command, that arch humbug, and, I am afraid, robber, Belata

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Gabrov. About noon he arrived with some 300 or 400 soldiers and paid his respects, saying he would make his official visit in the afternoon. We had, therefore, to get up the big hospital marquee for him, which was duly pitched facing the valley in which our future route lay. The tent was decorated with the Union Jack, white ensign, and the Admiral's flag, and the ground spread with Persian carpets and gaudy rugs from Smyrna. It looked, from a native point of view, a small palace. Certainly "Bully Gabrov," as he was afterwards called, must have been struck with its magnificence and the Admiral's wealth.

He had presents given him, and on the strength of those and the sound financial state of the mission immediately borrowed 100 dollars, which were given him readily, much to his delight. To him a present of a revolver, two rifles, and some carpets, besides a sum of money, was not a daily occurrence. Belata Gabrov is an ugly, middle-sized man, very thick-set, and athletic, with a reputation for being a good general, a quick mover, and cruel to his enemies, and a great robber. There is no doubt that he does take over and above his tribute and pound of flesh, and reads his instructions as to tribute a hundred cattle from one tribe, as a hundred of the fattest and best milch cows belonging to them. He is, perhaps, no worse than other natives, and certainly no worse than the Egyptians he has had to deal with.

We here got our Abyssinian escort told off to us, some of whom I had met before. One soldier named Rāta, who had been given as a guard to me on a former occasion, immediately made his headquarters at my tent. I gave him a present of a couple of coloured handkerchiefs, a dollar, and some gunpowder, and he was delighted and stuck to me

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through the whole mission and shot with me nearly every day. He knew where he was well off, as he always got the lion's share of the tedj (hydromel), meat, bread, etc., which was invariably sent me by Ras Aloula wherever we camped. The Admiral, Ma son, and sometimes Speedy were the only others honoured with such presents. An official travelling in Abyssinia can live on the country and be the King's guest as a right, but it is a great mistake to do so. I have invariably given more presents in exchange than the food is worth, and have seen that the people who supplied the food obtained the presents instead of the head man, who generally keeps everything. Very often the return present is refused; then I always give a present to the man's wife or daughters, and have thus always been gladly received by the villagers where foreigners have been coldly received. Indeed, more harm has been done in the country by foreigners demanding their rights, and giving nothing in exchange, than by anything else, and they owe their unpopularity simply to this cause. Pay your way and you can get on. At the same time always insist on the head man acknowledging his duty to bring you the rations you are entitled to. If you are more than one day at a village make him send them to you, and then return them, if not wanted, with a present. It has a good effect on your escort and on the population, and my experience from these tactics is that I have never been insulted in the country or found the least trouble in obtaining food.

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CHAPTER X.

WITH RAS ALOULA.

We left Ginda early next morning soon after sunrise for Felagobie, I being rear guard and expected to see everything off the ground. Two mules were left behind to bear for drinking-water, which is not to be depended on in the Madaraba Valley till after Felagobie is passed, unless it is procured by digging in the water-course. There is enough for a few travellers, but not for a large party. I did not know before how long it took to fill four ten-gallon tins with a half-pint pot; my men were an hour doing this. Certainly the well was four feet deep and the water at the bottom not more than six inches, but there was a perfect stream of water and a never failing one. I got a couple of guinea-fowls on their way down to drink at this well. Our route lay up the beautiful Madaraba Valley, nearly the whole road being along the water-course, and we were under trees with little or no bush, and our road was entirely in the shade. It is a beautiful road and the vegetation offers a fine field for a naturalist, the orchids being alone well worth a visit. According, however, to my usual luck they were not in flower.

The only time I was ever up this valley when they were in

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flower was in the month of September, when I procured three specimens, one with bells very much like a lily-of-the-valley with a light yellow tinge in the interior of the cup. This had five cups on each stem. Another was light purple with white spots, and another, which seemed the commonest, with a long stem pendant, covered with innumerable little yellowish star-shaped flowers, which were, however, insignificant and made it not worth collecting. What other orchids there are I don't know, as I never looked much for them, and my form and shape is not adapted to climbing trees where the orchids abide. I have never climbed a tree since I used to go birds'-nesting, except on one occasion when I lost myself near the Yalé river in Ceylon, and then I had to do so to see where I was, for I was without a compass, and there was no sun.

We got into camp at Felagobie at 9.30 a.m., and camped on the ordinary merchants' halting-ground, under the candelabra euphorbia trees, into the region of which we had climbed, and we were not out of the ordinary vegetation of the plains. Contributions had been made to the larder in the shape of dig-digs, hare, francolin, and guinea-fowl, and until we rose to the upland plateau we did not change the bag, except by adding a few spur-fowl. The road is too frequented for any larger game. The scenery, to me, was nothing new, but the rest of the mission seemed delighted. Villiers, the artist, was hard at work taking sketches, and in raptures with the candelabra, which certainly look very picturesque at night-time with the moon shining on them; the little pink, white, and yellow balls growing from the corners of the top branches look just as if they were innumerable little lamps, only waiting to be lighted by electricity to turn the valley into a perfect fairy scene. The

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night was quite chilly, and I found my great coat really comfortable as early as dinner time, which was at half-past seven. We have had no camp fire as yet. There is nothing so agreeable, I think, as the hour after dinner over a camp fire, talking about what has been done during the day, and what the plans are for the morrow. It is sociable and much better than sitting in a stuffy tent smoking. Our mission was not very sociable, as there were too many interests.

Off for another rough climb up the two passes, the first, Mahenzie Pass, a very stiff one and the worst of the lot on the road up. The mission started at 6.30 a.m., and I got away about an hour later with the last of the baggage animals, all of us not being able to be present at the meeting of Ras Aloula and the Admiral, which was to take place that day. Ras Aloula was to meet the mission at the head of the Asmara Pass, where it joins the plateau. About half-an-hour from camp I came across Villiers' horse, lying beside the road quite dead. It had been ill the night before, but showed no symptoms of what the disease turned out to be next morning, viz., the African horse disease. Some members of the mission suggested tsetse fly, but the fly is not known in this country, and is replaced by the seroot fly, of which we had seen specimens in the bush between Sahaati and Ailet, and, again, a very few of them at Sabagumba. The seroot fly does not kill, and is not fatal like the tsetse; it only by its sting drives the cattle nearly mad, and during some time of the year, generally in the rains, it is impossible to keep cattle in some districts, simply because the animals lose flesh and cannot feed because they are so annoyed. I have never been stung by the seroot fly, nor do I know a native who has. Once my mule threw me clean on being stung, and another time, coming from Saba-

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gumba to Sahaati by the direct route, I was walking behind my mule and all at once he kicked up behind, nearly knocking my head off, and had I not been on higher ground than he was he must have landed me. I don't know if he thought I had stuck a pin into him to wake him up, or that Mahomed had done it, but there was no doubt it was on account of a seroot fly, as Mahomed caught it about half a minute afterwards on a very tender part of the mule.

It was a pretty sight about 200 feet up the Mahenzie Pass for anyone in charge of the rear guard—a regular block: packages here, mules there, two down and stuck fast between rocks, here a mule with his load on one side, there another with his saddle under his belly, quietly eating grass and bushes, his load everywhere in a circuit of twenty yards. The language was awful, taking only the Arabic as a sample; the other dialects I did not know. Mule drivers understand their work; our men were not good drivers, the majority of them being coolies and Somalis. After squeezing my way through in great peril I found the cook's department and the Admiral's gear disorganized in the centre of the block. The whole stop was between two big rocks, where a mule was down and badly strained, and the fools in charge had not the sense to unload him. This was done and his packs put on one side, the mule started on to the front up the pass to give him a rest, and his packs left for a spare mule, the spare ones always coming last so as to take over cripples' loads. The block soon got dissolved, and I made everyone look to their packs before I let them go past me and told them not to follow too close after each other, as when mules get together they begin kicking.

We must have been an hour and a half getting up this

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bit, which is really not three-quarters of a mile long, but very much like going up the side of a house covered with ivy. There is no view to be got fifty yards either way except just at the bottom, as the trees shut in everything and make the pass shady. The height above the sea can now be appreciated in one's breathing becoming shorter. I found it so more this time than when I was last out here, when just fresh from England. We were all glad to get to the top, the road coming out between two high rocks about ten feet apart and about thirty feet high; how the rock ever split to open the road, which is the only one for twenty or thirty miles on either side of this range, no one knows, or who first found the road out. He must have been a persevering person and a regular explorer, as the Madaraba Valley has only one other outlet, which runs nearly east. This branches off about six miles further on than Ginda Plain, or half way between there and Felagobie, and it is said to come out at Sanheit and on to the Asmara Plain; but I have never shot more than four or five miles up it. It is only used by shepherds when driving their flocks from the highlands to lower pasturage, and *vice versa*. I made a halt at the open space at the top of the road leading down to the Mahenzie stream and camping ground, to see the last mule away and to enjoy the view, which is lovely. The climate is superb, not too hot when one is in the shade, and I should think the shade temperature here cannot be ever over 90° in the day, and never under 35° in the coldest of weather at night time. On the right one sees nothing but a tall mountain, wooded to its very summit with wild olive, ebony, thorn trees of the acacia tribe—perfect giants compared with the plain mimosa—candelabra, and other cacti, and the undergrowth chiefly of aloes of many sorts

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with jessamine, gladioli, wild geranium, blue climbing pea, and many other flowers too numerous to mention; fifty yards of sloping green turf (where my mule was enjoying himself), and then nearly a sheer drop some 700 or 800 feet into the Mahenzie Valley below, the whole side of the precipice covered with evergreen vegetation of the most luxurious description, facing one about a mile distant, but may be more; the opposite mountains are also timber clad to near the highest peak, then there is a sudden break; when one faces half-left the mountain range takes a turn, and the distance is filled in with the glorious Halai group of mountains, one of the grandest features of Northern Abyssinia, these peaks rising to over 12,000 feet above the sea. From where one is sitting they are over forty miles off, and from the end of Mahenzie Valley the ranges rise in gradual ascents from the Kiagour road till they lose themselves against the background of the Halai range. There was hardly a cloud to be seen, only one or two wreathes of mist under Halai's highest peaks.

A cigarette and a drink before going on, with one or two of the officers of the mission, and then down the road into the valley at a half walk, half run, the road just suiting this style of progression. Then up the Mahenzie Valley for a couple of miles, the road in the narrow watercourse now nearly dry, the ferns and flowers not being in their summer glory, then the face of the mountain before us, up which we have to go to reach the first true big plateau in Abyssinia. At the foot of the rise, the face of the pass here and there being dotted with pack animals with their loads, we came across some of the Ras's soldiers with the King's presents. Two of the men carried on their heads the gun-wheels of the little seven-pounders; another is pushing his in front

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of him, but not managing it so well as a wheelwright taking his work to the coachmaker's, as seen daily in the old country. There must have been something in that soldier, as he always followed the same plan whenever he got on level ground, and I saw him doing so on many occasions on the march up; the other men always carried theirs.

Up we climb the last pass, and on reaching the top the scenery changes, and so does the vegetation. The mountain peaks are now below us, except a few insignificant peaks in front, but on the other side there is below nothing but peaks; in the valley the last of the spare mules, which look like ants crawling along, we being so far above them. I remained behind again to see my own things come up, which I passed on the mountain's side, and I am just on the precipice where on my last trip up to Asmara I wounded a leopard on the lower ledge below and could not get down to finish him off, and when the Abyssinian, whom I asked to bring in the skin, succeeded in finding it some few days after, the skin was too far gone to be of any use. My boy's face was a sight, on getting on to the level, at seeing no mountains in front of him, and he asked me if he had reached the top of the world—a natural question to one who had always lived his life among the plains.

The weather here was delicious. A cool breeze was blowing, and exercise was perfectly enjoyable after the long sojourn in that Red Sea stew-pan. A half-hour's march, partly through fields, now in fallow, without a vestige of cultivation at this time of the year, past the curious juniper copses—which in the early morning hold so many francolin, guinea-fowl, and hares—and the little outlying farms with their hedges of dog-roses, brought us into Asmara at eleven a.m., where Ras Aloula was encamped, and where between his

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headquarters and the town of Asmara our tents were already being pitched. As soon as I came into camp I was told Ras Aloula wanted to see me, so, dirty as I was, I immediately called on my old friend. I found him in his tent, and he seemed very pleased to see me, asked me some questions; but I inquired at what time I might call and went back to make myself decent and to get something to eat. The keen, light air and the march had made us all hungry, and we made a good meal off guinea-fowl and francolin, cold beef, curry, and rice. After breakfast we were hard at work putting up the reception tent, and getting everything ready for the official visit from Ras Aloula, which was to take place that afternoon or next day. We made everything snug, as the Admiral was undecided how long he should stop, for it depended on this official visit, and, moreover, the mules wanted a day's rest after their climb, while the baggage required to be rearranged, as some of it was to be deposited here.

I was not present at the meeting of the Admiral with Ras Aloula, and regret very much that business kept me away. It was a fine sight, as the Ras was accompanied by a force of about 1,500 cavalry, armed with sword, spear, and guns, and over 2,000 infantry, who escorted the mission from the top of the pass right to the camp.

It is curious how the Abyssinians stow themselves away. We are now surrounded by over 6,000 soldiers. The English camp at Suakim, some 4,000 that were under canvas, made a great show, while here the force cannot be noticed, owing to the kind of shelter they put up, which consists of merely a lot of branches stuck in the ground to keep the sun off, a bullock hide and the native shamma being enough to keep off rain and cold. They are wonderful

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men, these Abyssinian soldiers, and the lot that are here now, if transported to Suakim, would have Osman Digna out of his hills and be into Berber in a month. What would Gordon say to the authorities that be? He hated Abyssinians because they did not treat him well, but time will tell whether they were not justified in the principle of their actions, if not the detail. I got myself into hot water once with the F.O. on this Abyssinian subject, because I think they have been ill-treated; but I am not a Blunt, and as long as the Soudan quiets down I don't care. After our evening meal the moon got up, looking frosty, and the stars were most brilliant, the Southern Cross and Great Bear just being visible, and the Milky Way very fine. The soldiers in their camps played their drums, which sound very weird. They may represent an accomplished taste, such as the bag-pipes and the Italian hurdy-gurdy, but they all sound best at a distance. Speedy says the drums talk; so they may, but I don't understand their language, and don't know the Abyssinian calls.

We had it wretchedly cold that night, and I only took my outer garments off and put on an ulster; I had to get up and put an extra pair of socks on, and with a blanket and two rugs I was not a bit too warm. My boy slept in the tent with me, and I found in the morning that he had put on my coat and trousers! It's no use talking or remonstrating with a personal servant in such matters, especially as the poor beggars have not half warm enough kit for these highlands, and once get them down with fever and cold they are useless.

My tent is a brute—bell shape, Egyptian make, warranted to keep in the heat during the day and keep it out during the night, and about as useless as most Egyptian things.

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Next morning I went the round of the mules with Kennedy to see how many sore backs there were. We found not more than three or four bad galls, which was lucky considering the work they had done. The morning was quite cold, and at first misty. Our warm cocoa on turning out was most acceptable. After breakfast some of us paid a visit to Berhano, whom I mentioned before. Asmara is his native town, and he is a great friend of Ras Aloula. Being a Mussulman he can visit Massowah whenever he likes, and is a sort of general walking-newspaper, edited, perhaps, monthly, or six-weekly, depending on his visits to Massowah. He has done me many a good turn, and I have helped him whenever a chance occurred.

Asmara is improving, and the signs of destruction occasioned in 1876 by that ruffian Walad-el-Michael, the Egyptian ally, and afterwards Gordon's *bête noir*, are disappearing fast, but still it will take years to bring up the population again to its former number, some 5,000 people. Poor Hamasen! from 1873 to 1878, both years included, it had a bad time of it. This plateau used to be called the Plain of the Thousand Villages. Not one-half of them are now occupied, and some of them have only perhaps five or six families living in them, while others are totally deserted. The ground went back from arable to bad grass, and the flocks having been slaughtered and robbed, they could not feed the grass down, so the really good pasturage has deteriorated and it is only immediately round the villages where there are any decent meadows. It will improve again in time, and there is a great deal more ground cultivated than formerly. The cultivation consists of peas, beans, lentils, grain, barley, oats, rye, wheat, tef, Indian corn, potatoes, cabbages, and nearly every sort of European vegetable;

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lucerne is cultivated, but no clover; good hay could be made, but no one seems to have recovered from the great shock and calamity of the devastation of the Hamasen by Walad-el-Michael, backed up by the Egyptian Pasha Osman Rifki and Bashi Bazouks lent by him. This Pasha I have mentioned before, so has Gordon in his letters, and not to the Pasha's credit. When I met him it was in 1877 in the desert between Berber and Suakim, near the wells of Mohébee, fleeing from the wrath of Gordon.

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CHAPTER XI.

DOMESTIC ABYSSINIA.

It is winter time now here, so there is no cultivation worth seeing, but when the crops are all on the ground one gets an idea of the fertility of the country, not more than forty-eight hours from Massowah. Asmara has nearly a European climate, and should Englishmen ever come to settle here a more charming climate could not be found: frosts are nearly unknown, it is never too hot and never too cold, and as a farming country for coffee, cinchona, and other staples, together with good rough shooting, it would be impossible to find a better. Just near our camp are the sources of the Ainsebā river; one passes the mule lines and runs from the Asmara plain past Sanheit and joins the Barca river, which passes out through Tokar and makes the fertility of that cotton and dhurra growing district thirty-eight miles south of Suakim. Trinkitat is the northernmost part of the Barca Delta, on which an Egyptian garrison capitulated, and a few days after English blood was being spilt and thousands of Arabs were being slaughtered at El Teb round the very boiler and building put up there for peaceful purposes. Many of our mission had, not six weeks before, taken part in this engage-

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ment at the mouth of this river, and now they are at its source on a peaceful errand to a Christian nation.

Asmara is a bad example of an Abyssinian town, considering it is one of the frontier stations where tolls are levied, and of great importance strategically, being so close to the key of the Abyssinian stronghold for the Hamasen, viz., Addetchlai, Ras Aloula's ordinary place of residence. The town is simply a collection of stone huts, with bee-hive or flat roofs; the former thatched roofs made of straw, the latter flat, like ordinary Arab huts in Egypt. Good lime being unknown, mortar is not used, and stiff clay takes its place. The houses are generally in a compound,* the house and its outbuildings forming always two sides, and often three sides of the enclosure, the other side generally being composed of a low stone wall topped with branches of mimosa or other prickly shrub. The houses are built of flat stones, from two to six or seven inches thick, by about six inches to two feet long, by nearly the same in breadth. These stones are chosen as flat as possible, and are laid in regular layers with clay for mortar between them; they bind together very well, and, in the hands of artistic workmen, might be made to look well. The walls are about ten feet high for flat-topped houses, and about six feet for bee-hive roofed ones. The ceilings are made thus: the rafters from the split trunks and limbs of the candelabra euphorbia; mats are placed over them, then a layer of mats, then a layer of very thin stones, and the whole plastered with clay and cow dung; they are then quite waterproof; the drainage from the rains is carried off by spouts made out of the young branches of the candelabra hollowed out.

No windows are to be seen on the outside of the house facing

* A compound means an enclosure.

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the streets; generally the smaller houses have none, and the only place where air is let in is by the door during the day, and by the small hole over the cooking place in the roof, which lets, or does not let, the smoke out, according to the state of atmosphere. If there is more than one house in the compound the dwelling-house generally besides the door has one window, closed with a shutter, fixed with leathern hinges. The outbuildings in the compounds are used as cooking places, where the females generally remain during the day, looking after domestic work, superintending the cooking, and grinding the different grains used for making their many sorts of bread. During the night all the family live in one room, and the outhouses are used as stables for the mules, horses, cows, sheep, and goats; the poultry roost above the cattle. This is a description of a better class of house; the room used by the better class has generally a divan running round three sides of the walls, the other side being used to keep grain on, which is stored in large earthenware utensils, like the ordinary water-coolers used all over the East.*

Round the walls are inserted cow horns, to act as pegs to hang clothes and other things on, one wall being generally kept entirely for arms, consisting of guns, rifles, swords, spears, knives, and shields. Some of the people have angareebs or bedsteads, a frame resting on four legs, with leathern thongs strapped across. Over this is thrown a brown tanned ox skin. When clean they make comfortable sleeping places, but as a rule they are full of vermin: bugs, fleas, &c., and a white louse with a red stripe down him, which looks very much as if he was raised in the

* They are rat and insect proof, and keep the grain dry, and it does not absorb moisture.

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country, and by the people, whose national dress, of both male and female, consists of the white shamma with the usual red stripe.*

Lower class and poorer people have but one room. The house is then generally much longer than it is broad; about a fourth of its length is composed of a raised daïs about two feet from the ground. Here all the family sleep, and all the household goods are stored; cooking, grinding, everything is done on this elevation. The rest of the room is taken up by the animals, and a mixed crowd it is.

I once slept a night in a house of this sort in the village of Sada-Kustan, and never did I spend such a night. My servant and myself hardly slept a wink; it was too cold to sleep outside, and tent we had none. I never shall forget the next morning! I was very civil to the owner, and expressed my thanks to him, and as soon as it was warm enough and we could come across water, in we went. What our bodies looked like, lumps, bumps, and knobs over every part! The lower class Abyssinian knows nothing about cleanliness, though he is A1 at godliness. The higher class is but little cleaner, and neither of them has the least idea of what sanitary arrangements mean; they act as the brute beasts that sleep in the same room with them. I don't say the King and the nobles are so, nor Ras Aloula, nor was his amiable wife, who had just died. The Abyssinian Christianity and civilization is about on a par with ours in England in the eleventh century, and some of them, the higher classes, are about the same as Mr. Parnell's lower class of peasant Irishmen—not the mud-hut people, but small

* The shammas are beautifully woven; the white part is of cotton, which mostly comes from Gallabat or Tokar; the red stripe is of yarn (Turkey red) imported from Bombay or England.

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farmers. The authorities of Abyssinia are what the better class of "modliars" are in Ceylon, and the jemadars of India.

The town of Asmara is not laid out in streets, nor is there any regularity about it; it has been built haphazard on two low hills or mounds above the ordinary plateau level, and now consists of perhaps three hundred houses at most, the only clearing in it being near the church, towards which most of the lanes that represent streets run out. The church occupies the highest point of the town, as is customary in nearly every Abyssinian village or town. A description of the church here will suffice as an example of the ordinary houses of worship throughout the country, but as some village churches in England are prettier and more picturesque than others, both in their surroundings and architecture, so it is here. Perhaps the church here being in the town looks bleaker than others.

But the characteristic feature of the whole of the Hamasen plain in winter time is its want of colour. It puts one in mind of the Downs or white country of Northumberland and Cumberland. It is bleak and windy, and with the exception of the wild sycamore, fig tree, and a few candelabra there is absolutely no timber. The landscape is very different in crop time, and the vivid patches of green, relieved here and there with grain in various stages of maturity, give a civilized and homely aspect to the country, and one's thoughts immediately go back to the sweltering plains 36 hours' distance, where a European can barely exist, let alone live. Indeed, it is hard to realize that this paradise of a climate is so near to the perfect purgatory of the environs of Massowah. No wonder the Abyssinians have fought for their country, and since the

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Turk and Egyptian have striven to take and annex these plateaux from the hardy mountaineers there is hardly a yard of ground on the roads up to the plateau that has not seen either Christian or Moslem blood shed, and it is saying a good deal for the former, that from the time of the Moslem era they have held their own, although at a great disadvantage as regards arms. Now that they are armed with weapons of precision they have a better chance of driving back invaders than ever, and it will take great internal and domestic disorders among the inhabitants of Abyssinia before the Moslems, or even European countries, can ever expect to win foothold in these mountains.

The church, then, at Asmara is no better or no worse than others as far as the building is concerned; its chief feature is its bell,* which is hung in a small beehive building built in the compound surrounding it. The compound is circular, and enclosed by a low stone wall about four feet high. The entrance to the compound is through a small porch, closed by a very ragged door of rough hewn planks, bound together by thongs of raw hide; the top of the porch is covered with thatch. The compound is badly kept, and with the exception of a few tall bulrushes there is no vegetation at all except short grass growing over the graves. No monument marks the place of interment except the inequality of the ground, and the little nameless mound is the only memento of one that lived and moved, and took his place for good or for bad in life's struggle. The dead here lie in consecrated ground; our poor countrymen in the Soudan desert do not; their graves

* It is a pretty large bell and there are not many churches in Abyssinia that possess bells. Stones, black and hard, which may be of porphyry, are pierced and hung in the verandahs of some churches and do service for bells. They give out a peculiar gong-like sound.

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are lasting ones, and will not be disturbed; ours, I daresay, are already hard to trace, and the sand and mimosa will have covered them—hardly a fitting cover for those who fought bravely and died for no reason, and for no policy, save that of party politics at home.

In the centre of the compound is the church, its floor being about two feet above the level of the enclosure. The building, which is of stone, is about 50 feet in diameter. The walls are, say, about 18 feet high; the floor is reached by two steps, leading to a low verandah about six feet broad. This is supported by poles made from the candelabra euphorbia. A door opens into the church, and at intervals of about six feet on each side of the door there are windows, and these run round the building at the same intervals of space. The windows are rough lattice work guileless of shutters.* Generally opposite the door is the Holy of Holies, where the priests are alone allowed to enter.

The decorations consist of roughly coloured pictures of Old and New Testament stories. The artistic talent is of the Noah's Ark sort, and all the faces of the men and women look the same way. The figures are straight up and down, and it is just a question of guesswork to say what sex they are intended to represent. St. George, his horse, and the dragon, a very common picture in Abyssinian churches, is generally the most amusing. The dragon is a mild-looking creature, and always painted in the same old uncomfortable position, with a lance the size of a good thick tree run through him. St. George does not look a gentleman, nor is his horse well bred, and my sympathies always go with the dragon, who looks hardly used.

* All the doors and windows in the country are square, and have no arches like the Arabian style of architecture.

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The only things about the churches worth looking at are the very artistic crosses, which are placed on the top of the bee-hive roof, and the lovely sacred pigeons that invariably make their nests in the roof of the churches, and in the porches at the entrance of the churchyards. These pigeons are about the size of the English blue rock, but much handsomer; the tinge and groundwork of the plumage is brown and grey, with decided rufous brown markings in the centre of the feathers of the wing coverts. The ring round the neck is also composed of small, nearly white and brown feathers. The iris round the eye is of a vivid scarlet, and when the sun is shining fully on the bird the plumage has a fine metallic lustre, and the male bird, when talking to his lady-love, is one of the most beautiful specimens of nature's bird creation that can be found. I have never heard of their being taken home or exhibited anywhere, and I have often tried to get specimens of them alive, but never could get an Abyssinian to procure me any, although they are very tame and there would be no difficulty in catching them.

The market at Asmara, which takes place weekly, is held on the green outside the town. The sellers come in with their wares, which consist chiefly of flour, made of wheat, dhurra, and other grains, ghee, chillies, honey, cotton, shammas—with the red stripe of Turkey red yarn, the national dress of the country, and hand-woven by the villagers—rock salt, oxen, cows, sheep, goats, horses, and mules. Asmara is about the only market where one sees poultry, guinea-fowl, and francolin for sale; these are bought up by the petty pedlars who trade with Massowah. They go down to the coast with a crate of about fifty on

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their heads, walk the whole way down, and bring back some few cotton cloths, coloured pocket handkerchiefs, and snuff; the latter they sell contraband.

I know a good many small merchants in this part who commenced trading in this way, and now own many mules. It is very amusing at Ginda at the water holes there to see one of these petty pedlars giving his chickens a rest and a run. He lets about five or six out at a time, takes the precaution to tie their legs so that they cannot escape, and, after they have had a drink and eaten some grain, they are put back in their cage, and then others are let out till the whole lot of them have gone through their course of exercise. There is no doubt the mortality is kept under by this means, but it is a lot of trouble to take with a stock-in-trade valued at the most up country at two dollars. The Massowah value of the birds on arrival there may be about five to six dollars, according to the number of steamers in the harbour. Guinea-fowl are rather more valuable, both in Asmara and Massowah, fetching at the latter place say 1s 6d per pair.

The game round Asmara was greatly disturbed by the number of troops, and the town pond was void of wild geese and ducks. At ordinary times one has only to go about 200 yards outside the church to get in half-an-hour as many wild duck and geese as one needs to keep camp going for a couple of days. The first time I was here I thought the birds were tame ones belonging to the town, but was informed that the Abyssinians never kept them and never eat them, as they looked upon them as unclean and dirty feeders. I was not so scrupulous, but I do object to a tame Eastern duck for many reasons, and never touch them, although the bonny fat birds in old England are a treat. There was no game brought into camp our first

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day here, and only a few sand grouse and a hare or two the second day. We had got into a country with a new hare, not unlike and nearly the size of the English one, and to my mind just as good eating. The plain hare, found throughout the Soudan, is a poor creature with long ears, like a jackass rabbit, but still he makes good chow-chow and excellent soup, as well as good stew served with a red-wine sauce.

Ras Aloula came to pay his visit in return for the Admiral's, and he said he was going on to his place at Addetchlai the next morning, and that the Admiral was to follow. In the afternoon Villiers and I went up to call upon the Ras, and he was asked to sit for a sketch. Abyssinians, as a rule, don't mind being sketched, and many of the remarks they make during the process are most original and interesting. I had a long chat with Ras Aloula, and he told me to come and see him at every opportunity. On leaving him I gave him the only presents I could, namely, a Persian carpet and a sporting Martini rifle, taking Government ammunition, of course. After the splendid presents he had had given him by the Admiral mine were nothing, but the kind and gentlemanly way in which he received them was quite pleasing, and I believe if you presented him with a wooden spoon he would still behave in the quiet, thoroughbred manner which is inherent in this border chieftain. People in England have only heard of the great robber Ras Aloula through Egyptian sources, coloured by Moslem intrigue, and Gordon cannot say that he was not treated by him in a proper manner.

Ras Aloula's version, which is correct—and Gordon would not have denied it—is that it was not till the very last interview took place that any disagreement arose between

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them, and I don't think the most civilized general and diplomatist would have acted otherwise than Ras Aloula did. Gordon told him frankly that if war broke out again between the two countries he and his Soudan troops would invade the country, and that he would lead them. Ras Aloula had no power to treat, but had instructions to send Gordon on to King John. It was not likely, therefore, that Gordon, having once told Ras Aloula that he would be in command of any expedition, would be shown by Ras Aloula the short cuts and good roads to Debra Tabor, where the King was.

Gordon was sent up hill and down dale, and not taken over any of the commercial or military roads. This was the only treatment that he received at the hands of Ras Aloula, who speaks most highly of him, and said he was his best friend; and there is no doubt that he always has listened to and helped Gordon in every way in his power.

Ras Aloula is a man about forty years of age, a little above the average height, say about five feet nine inches. He is very well built, has broad shoulders and a deep chest, which makes him look shorter than he really is. He is muscular and athletic, and can hold his own with any men of his army in feats of skill, such as riding and shooting. He is a great sportsman, when he has the time to devote to the chase, which latterly has not been very often. He wears his hair cut short as a rule, and lets it grow naturally, not plaiting it like the majority of his nation. His complexion is copper-coloured, not very dark; his face oval, his nose of good shape, his mouth small, set off by good teeth. His whole features are regular, and when he smiles, which he often does when talking in private and not before his followers, his face is most pleasing, and his

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manner winning. He can be very stern, and on business or political occasions almost as immovable as a statue.

He has the reputation, and has no doubt earned it, of being a good general, a skilful tactician, and a rapid marcher. His has been a turbulent frontier to look after, and he has to fight against Egyptian intrigues, and in this he has been perfectly successful. He was pitted for a long time against Walad-el-Michael, the Abyssinian traitor, backed up and armed by the Egyptian officials, and came off victorious. His soldiers, under Belata Gabrou, have, no doubt, been unnecessarily harsh when dealing with some of the frontier tribes, but semi-civilized nations, and, I am afraid, Europeans, have been known to go in for reprisals. The Moslems steal the Abyssinians as slaves; a father or brother has to revenge the loss of a wife or sister, and he does so when he gets a chance. They plead the absolute necessity of keeping their enemies in order, and that they are obliged to kill them. We pleaded the absolute necessity of killing the wounded Arabs at El Teb and Tamaai; if we were justified in doing so, surely they are.

Ras Aloula is a great favourite of King John's, and he has *carte-blanche* to do what he likes. He also follows King John in his private life with but one exception, viz., he is not as religious. He has one wife at a time, which he marries according to law, the same as the King, and has no concubines, which most of the influential people have, and he has one child, a pretty little daughter about eight years old. The late Mrs. Aloula was a very fair and handsome woman. The Ras, they say, was devoted to her, and it was a great blow to him when she died some three months ago. She was then still young, about twenty-four years old.

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The hydromel and the feast my servants had off the provisions sent me by the Ras were too much for them. They and their friends got through a good sized cow, some 200 breads, chutney, &c., and bought more tedj or hydromel in the town. The respectable Moslem and total abstainer Saïd got drunk, though not badly. He said it was the first and last time he would ever drink tedj, and I believe him. Ali was dead drunk, and I had to drive him away to the mule lines to herd with the other mule-drivers, who also seemed to be merry. Mahomed was asleep with his blind eye open, and he had had quite enough. I made Saïd and Mahomed turn in at one end of the tent, and covered them up. I knew very well that they would keep quiet until it was time to turn out in the morning. It was very cold next morning, for there had been a little dew in the night and the tents were quite damp, so packing took some time. There was no hurry, as we had only an eight-mile march over a level plain to Addetchlai.

I got away last, waited at the pond to see if any geese would come, but they did not, and then cut across country to the Auseba source which runs south from Asmara for a couple of miles and then winds round and runs nearly N.W. towards the range of hills on which Sanheit is placed. The stream was perfectly dry, the grass on its banks and the rushes all dead, and not a duck, snipe, or goose to be seen even in the little pools. About half way to Addetchlai two geese flew over, and I marked them down in a pond about half a mile off, and after a successful stalk through the rushes I managed to kill one of them; the other got away. The Abyssinian geese are the same as the Egyptian ones; they remain in Abyssinia summer and winter, and breed there. The ducks do not, with the exception of the

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black duck, which seems to be a "native" and peculiar to the country. It is a fine bird, about the size of the pintail, a trifle more thick-set, and the plumage when the bird is flying looks quite black, both back and belly. When handled, however, there are innumerable little white feathers that make the bird look as if it had been sprinkled with flour. The plumage is not at all unlike the skin of the silver-grey rabbit.

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CHAPTER XII.

TOWNS AND CHURCHES.

At ten o'clock we arrived at Addetchlai and were greeted by the inhabitants, who had turned out to see the unusual sight. The Admiral and his party had been conducted up to the fortress of Addetchlai, and some of the laden mules had also attempted to get up before they were turned back. The strongest side of the fortification is towards the north and north-east. The easiest road up is on the west side, and then that of the south is also pretty difficult. Although the road upon the west side is easy, it is entirely commanded from three points, and in time of war a couple of hours' work closing it would make it impregnable against all but European troops. This is the shortest cut to the water holes, which are stationed about 600 yards from the western-most part of the position, and perfectly covered by the rifles of the garrison. Addetchlai could never be stormed by natives, and could only be starved out. There is water to be obtained at the top of the hill, but very little. The fortress of Addetchlai and its works cover the whole of the small plateau on which it is situated. Besides Ras Aloula's houses for his family and friends, the soldiers' and officers' huts, there are stores where the provisions are kept, a market,

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and a church. The hill on the north-west and east sides is most abrupt, with the exception of the roads before named, and from some distance off they looked almost perpendicular. The view from the south of the fortress is curious; the gradual rise from the plain till the line of fortifications is reached gives a turtle-backed appearance to the hill. The visit to Ras Aloula took place in the afternoon, and nearly the whole of the mission were present. The Ras received us in the big reception hut; he, a priest or two, and some of his senior officers being present. The hut is a very large one, round in form, with a thatched roof, and about twenty feet high by fifty diameter.

We pitched camp at the foot of the fortress in a fallow field, my tent being at the very end of the field; just outside it was a bank with a drop of about twenty feet into the next field. There is no shooting at Addetchlai worth speaking of, it being too thickly inhabited, but there are a few coveys of partridges and an occasional hare. At about sunset the usual food supplies arrived from the Ras—oxen, sheep, bread, chutney, and hydromel, the three latter being carried by young women, one of whom was very good looking and, for a wonder, had very clean clothes on. I always remarked that the pretty girls got more coloured pocket handkerchiefs as presents than the ugly ones, and that the latter were always jealous of their more favoured sisters.

On turning into my tent for the night, which was a showery one, I found I had a bedfellow, and in the dark I could not tell who it was. I tried to find my servants, and to get a light. At last I found Saïd in a neighbouring tent and he procured a light. On entering the tent there stood the hydromel jar empty. Pulling the clothes off my bed I found the sleeper to be Ali, with his boots on. We dragged

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him out by his heels, and stood him up outside the tent. There could be no mistaking his state, for when I spoke to him he abused me, and he made a rush past me and into bed again. I got him out, took him to the top of the bank near my tent, and pushed him down into the next field, where he lay till next morning, when he awoke with a very bad head and covered with mud. A visit to the mule-lines, where a certain amount of stick is served out on such occasions, elicited apologies and the promise that it never would occur again. I mention this case of drunkenness as they are most frequent among the Mahomedan Abyssinians who have served Europeans, and who are certainly, with few exceptions, the most worthless class of native I know, having all the vices of the semi-Europeanized-Egyptian and the lower class of Abyssinian.

Ras Aloula was to remain behind here for a day or two until a message came from the King, and the mission was to proceed on by easy stages to Adowa. Soon after daylight next morning we all went up to bid good-bye to Ras Aloula, and he walked with us to the fortifications, when we took the southern road down the hill, our faces pointing towards the distant peaks of the mountains on and around which Adowa is seated, which were now plainly visible above the horizon.

I was glad to act as advanced guard this morning, as I did not know the country further south of Addetchlai, and I and the guide and interpreter, young Bru, could make our own pace and get on and pick out camp. Soon after leaving Addetchlai one gets out of the fallow and broken-up land into good grass country interspersed by springs and pools of water. The road is in the centre of a small plain; on the left the ground falls rapidly towards cliffs covered

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with timber till the Mareb Valley is reached, and on the right cliffs rise up from the plain with a gradual tendency of a fall in the land south-easterly. These cliffs and plain form the sources of the Mareb River, which is called in the low countries the Gash, and runs out eventually past Cassala, and then joins the Atbara, and so to the Nile.

About an hour out from Addetchlai the big source of the Mareb is reached. It comes bubbling out of the mountain side in a small gorge; there is then a pool about twenty yards across of most beautiful cold spring water. The overflow crosses the road, which is here very narrow, and on the top of a cañon, and then falls into the chasm below. During the rains the waterfall must be very fine, as it is nearly a sheer drop of 300 to 400 feet to the commencement of the Mareb Valley. At this season it is but an insignificant stream. The view from the top of the cañon is very fine, as the cliffs on each side are covered with vegetation of all sorts. Soon after passing this place the road is down hill, and cultivated land is again reached. There are a great many good grazing fields here like water meadows, green all the year round and fed by springs, the water from which all drains towards the Mareb.

Here are reached the first villages in Abyssinia that are different to those in the North Hamasen and Bogos country. They are always situated on the top of the hills, and either one or two sides are formed by the rocks against which the houses are built. They look very curious, and are not visible at any great distance, and if trees were planted in front of the collection of huts they could not be seen at all. The tendency of the natives in Abyssinia is to build their houses and villages as far as possible from the usual and most frequented roads; the

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reasons for this are obvious: travellers can demand shelter, foreigners their rations, soldiers can live free, and therefore to live near the roadside is like keeping a public-house in England, where the majority of customers would be those who had free drinks and free food. No one can accuse the Abyssinians of lack of hospitality, but for a single person to live on the high road would be ruin in a very short time.

We had now reached Sāul district, and had to make a choice of camping grounds, there being many pretty and picturesque sites offering. Here I saw the finest specimens of the sycamore figs I had ever seen—perfect giants of the vegetable creation. I measured one, whose branches gave over sixty paces of shade, and the circumference of the trunk of the tree was exactly five times that which I could stretch with my arms out; two or three were of a trifle smaller dimension. We at last chose a camp in the meeting of three small valleys. In the centre of the camp was a spring of very good water, round which was a clump of trees and wild date and dom palms, which gave a pleasant shade during the heat of the day, and the foliage was so thick that the sun's rays could not penetrate. We had the camp complete by noon, and the Admiral gave out that we should not go on till the day after to-morrow, as he was in no hurry, not being able to see the King for some time, and the camping ground was such a good one.

We passed a couple of very pleasant days here, shooting morning and evening and making good bags. The shooting was really perfect, and for small game not to be beaten; large game was reported as plentiful about half a day's march to the westward, consisting of leopard, kudoo, pig, and several smaller sorts of gazelle, the names of which I do not know, nor have I seen them in captivity nor in the hands of the

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men who usually trade with wild beasts to Abyssinia and the Soudan. One thing I know for certain, that they do not inhabit the Soudan plains and are only found in Abyssinia. Three specimens I have seen, one called the "sassa," a thick-set little fellow, larger than the dorcas and damer gazelle of the plains, with straight horns, colour yellowish, with light belly, but not white; coat more like wool. This is found in the hills, and is very good eating. Another is very much like and about the same size as the hog deer of India, and the same colour. I have only seen one specimen of this, a young one, and I believe it to be the same as the Indian kind, only a gazelle instead of a deer. It lives entirely in the jungle and only comes out to feed on the outskirts. The other, one specimen, a buck, I also got hold of. This is also about the same size as the ordinary plain gazelle, but heavier; colour yellowish brown, merging into white underneath, white tail, glands under the eyes larger and more pronounced than in most gazelles, and the horns like the chamois. It lives in the low scrub and feeds on the crops, and is, therefore, very destructive, and being much shot at they are very wild and hard to approach.

We got up a drive here for the Admiral, which, I am sorry to say, was spoilt by the guns not being contented with their positions and getting out of line. Most of the guinea-fowl and francolin got turned and went off to the right. The drive was a very pretty one, the whole of a small valley with a spur covered with vegetation from one of the hills running out into the valley. The guns were on the spur. The gun to the left went about 100 yards in advance and commenced firing and spoilt the sport. The Admiral, I think, got five guinea-fowl in about as many shots, and our bag was 17½ brace of guinea-fowl, some francolin, two

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partridges, and five hares—three of which I got in less than two minutes, in a rough grass field. There are plenty of villages and plenty of cultivation, and animals of all sorts all round Sāul; and provisions were very cheap, including eggs and poultry.

The spring and the clump of trees in the middle of the camp were an endless source of amusement to little Missy, the fox terrier, as it was inhabited by frogs, water rats, water rails, and a small night heron or two, which afforded her an ample hunting ground, and the trees had many crows and pigeons' nests in them.

A description of a village near this camp and the ones at Asmara will suffice for the road all through Abyssinia as far as Adowa.

A hill, as I have said, is chosen as far from the road as possible, one that slopes gradually down to the cultivated ground being preferred, and the ground at the top of the hill is hollowed out, making a sort of overhanging cliff. This cliff is propped up with beams; a lean-to roof is then made and thatched, and stones placed on the thatch. There are generally one or two windows and a door. A line of these houses is thus made and the ground cleared in front, when a palisade or zareba is made round all, and the habitation is complete.

It seems very curious coming up from the opposite side of the hill, as one is on the top of a roof of a house before one knows where one is, and the consternation of the ladies, children, and animals is generally great when a white man appears above them. The natives say their reason for building on the tops of the hills—although they are exposed to the full force of the rain—is because they are thus out of danger of landslips, that often occur during the rains and

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that the earth dries quicker, and that they are not so liable to fevers as if their houses were built in the valley below, and that their villages are easier defended against attack, and from wild beasts. The furniture of the houses is the same as at Asmara, and wood largely takes the place of stone in the construction of the outhouses.

The church at Sāul is very pretty, and is situated on a range of small hills about two miles from camp. It was entirely shut in by a grove of trees—candelabra and a tree new to me. The priest spoke a little Arabic; consequently he got a dollar backsheesh.

The priests are, as a rule, very poor, and they never work. If they would only set a good example and teach industry and thrift instead of mixing themselves up in politics the country would be better off. The church here wants sadly disestablishing, as its teachings are entirely retrograde, and the priests cannot claim any work of utility that they have done for the country, and they live on the people.

We left Sāul soon after seven o'clock on the 18th for Teremnie, another short march of about two hours, the road the whole way being good and flat and through cultivated ground, and it is only just before Teremnie that grass land is again reached. The plain has a water-course flowing through it, which gives plenty of water all the year round, and the grass in places is particularly good. The country round is very open, and in all the valleys that lead into the main plain grain is grown. We had a long afternoon; I went out with my gun and got a few guinea-fowl and a hare, and was unfortunate in not getting a shot at some gazelle, five of them, though within 60 yards. The bush was too thick, and when they reached the open they were more than 250 yards off. I also caught a glimpse

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at, I suppose, what is called a tiger cat. He was about twice the size of a good big Persian cat, and beautifully spotted. It was another of my unlucky days, as I lost four guinea-fowl. It was a nasty, damp night, and the hyenas were in fine song, which made sleep disagreeable.

I found a decided case of African horse disease among the mules that day. It is strange where the animals have contracted it, as it is rare in the country, and the natives say there is none about now and all their animals are healthy.

Off again early for a short march to Koodoofelasie, or Gudufelasie, as it is sometimes written, where we are to remain over Sunday, it being the Abyssinians' Easter Sunday. I do not remember when ours was, as I have been away so long from where an English church is situated, and one day out here is very much the same as the other. The people don't wear tall hats and clean shirts and Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes one day of the week, and if one had to judge Sunday by the clean clothes put on by the natives Sunday would not occur very often. The road from Teremnie runs for about a mile through cultivated ground and then rises gradually till it opens out into a country, the chief features of which are large open grass lands, belts of stunted trees and bush, with an occasional patch of cultivated ground round the water springs. Those at the northern part drain towards the north-east, past Teremnie to the Mareb; those situated to the south drain east and south-east towards Koodoofelasie, and join the Mareb east of that town. The whole country between the two camping-grounds is largely stocked with cattle, the people evidently finding it a convenient distance from Addetchlai, being too far for the soldiers stationed there to come and annex a cow or sheep when they feel so inclined, which happens often.

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About two miles from Koodoofelasie the road branches into two; the south-easterly one straight to the town, the southerly one to the direct road to Adowa. We took the former one, as we did not know where our camping-ground would be, and on reaching the town we were surprised to find the Admiral and his party had not arrived.

We got near the church just in time to see a procession entering it, headed by the priests bearing crucifixes and other symbols. They had made a turn round the town getting Easter offerings, etc., and were going to say their prayers. I was not very much interested in them and their followers, but they looked rather clean, and had it not been for a muffin bell that they had with them they would have been a peaceable and orderly lot; the bell spoilt the show. Koodoofelasie is not much of a town, being irregularly built, with many open spaces, where a few trees are scattered here and there amongst the "compounds" and market-places, for which it is famed, a very large market being held there every week, on Tuesday, I believe.

Looking east from the town one can see the Mareb Valley, about eight miles off, the ground sloping gradually down to the river; looking westwards the plain of Koodoofelasie is nearly surrounded by a low range of hills, the two openings divided by isolated hills, showing the roads southerly to Adowa, and westerly to the Mareb, the water from the plain running westerly and joining the Mareb about thirty miles off. We went in search of the Admiral and found him at breakfast with his staff, he having taken the direct road and then turned off. As it was getting near noon, and the majority of the transport animals not having turned up, we all set upon Colyer, who had his department up, and what with the hot morning and the

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long ride over five miles out of our way we all did justice to the meal which followed. Before breakfast was over we heard distant thunder, and could see that there was plenty of rain falling towards the east and south, and a heavy storm going on. We had to pick out a camping ground, and it seemed a choice of taking the least rough of the fallow fields, but they were "all much of a muchness." Mason and Villiers had got the only good bit of ground, which was too small for the mission to camp on, so we all moved over the little stream and found at last a stubble field, which was fairly smooth, on which we pitched tents.

In the afternoon, as the larder was empty, some of us went out to replenish it, and had various success. I went away to the small hills south-east, but had a long walk over very rough broken ground before I put up a hare, and till then I had only seen the wretched "Did you do it's" and a few grouse. I missed the hare both barrels, an easy shot, and the report put up two of the smaller bustards,* which I marked down, and on walking towards where they pitched another got up, which I shot. I then got one of the pair I marked down, and the other flew over a small hill and was gone. I then came across some very large herds of cattle going homewards, and as they had been grazing all day near where I was shooting I took a cast to the left into new ground, and soon picked up two hares and another small bustard, in all quite a load for Mahomed to carry. It was now getting dusk, and camp was over two miles off and bad ground to cross. I knocked over another bustard, but the smoke hung and I could not quite mark it. Mahomed ought to have got it easily, but did not. He was

* We saw no great bustards in Abyssinia, and none after leaving Ailet, nor have I seen any higher up than the second range of hills.

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evidently perfectly satisfied with what he had already to carry. The bag to-day was not a big one, the bustard being the only new variety of chow-chow, a few hares, a few francolin, and a grouse or two being the sum total; but quite enough to please the cook.

Sunday was a gloomy day, and there was every prospect of there being rain and little or no sun. We overhauled kit, repacked things, cleaned guns, went over saddles, both baggage and riding, putting a stitch here and there, and at noon after breakfast as there was no sun I went for a stroll with my gun. The first thing I shot was a jackal, which I sent to the cook, as he disliked being chaffed, and then went in the same direction where I lost the bustard the night before. I had not been two minutes looking for it before I found the remains of the body. I got two bustards, a hare, some plover (ox eye), and a few grouse, and then as it began to rain went back to camp. At about five o'clock, although the weather looked bad, Graham persuaded me to come out for a short ride and take the guns. We rode through Koodoofelasie, and then towards some hills on which a monastery and church are situated, and soon after leaving the town we got into some thick bush, then out into some fields, and again into bush, where we saw two gazelle.

We had got about half-a-mile into the thicket when it commenced to rain. I never saw a storm come on so rapidly. From rain ordinary it commenced to pour, and it was hard to see twenty yards in front. We got under a bush, and put the mules in front of us sideways to keep the rain off, but they insisted in keeping tail on, and so were no protection. A lull in the storm, however, enabled us to make a start again, and we went

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on for about ten minutes, but the storm commenced afresh with renewed vigour, and the thunder and lightning were tremendous. The rain at first was warm, it was then followed by a cold blast, and down came the hail, and such hail! It was impossible to face it; the mules would not move, and Mahomed and the other gun-bearer were quite benumbed with the cold. I was wet through; my thick shooting coat, waistcoat, flannel shirt and jersey drenched, and my lower garments, ending in tight gaiters, did not let out the water quick enough. Graham, being lightly clad, was even worse off, and the poor boys were shivering. We had to find the thickest bush possible, which was but a poor one, and the half hour we remained under it was perfect torture. I tried to get on my mule, but I was so cold that it took me several attempts before I could even get my leg across the saddle, and my teeth were chattering, and I was shivering all over. We had great difficulty in getting our animals out of a walk at first, but at last we got them to canter, and kept it up all the way to camp, reaching it just as it was dark, and I never was more pleased than when I swallowed a large glass of hot grog. It took Saïd and Ali all their time to get my clothes off, and my body was perfectly wrinkled, and my hands and feet dead cold, and it was over an hour before I got my circulation back. A good dinner, more hot grog, a big dose of quinine, and sleep no doubt prevented me from being the worse next morning. I never remember being out in such a cruel storm in my life, and I have seen some bad ones.

The tents were all wet in the early morning, and as they were very much heavier to carry we were told that our next march was to be a short one. So we all got

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away in good spirits, as the camping ground was uninteresting both as regards scenery and situation. I remained till nearly last, and determined to have a good shoot on my way to Onahiala, as it was only an hour and a half's ride further on, and there was not much work to do except tents to pitch, and the big tent was never put up till the afternoon. I took Mahomed and another boy with me to hold the mule, as Mahomed carried my rifle. I turned off to the east of the road, keeping parallel with it as far as I could judge, and commenced shooting at small game until I could find traces of or see gazelle. In about an hour I got two bustard, three hares, and two guinea-fowl. I then came out into a bit of open country where I could see our transport about three-quarters of a mile off. Simultaneously I sighted two gazelle feeding. I was a bit above them, and they had not seen me, but the wind was foul and they might wind me at any time.

I luckily had a couple of B B cartridges with me, and my rifle and Mahomed were far behind, and I was afraid of the gazelle seeing him, so I took off my hat and made a stalk, and managed to get within seventy yards of the buck. I gave him both barrels at the head, and off he went for about fifty yards, when he began running in circles. I ran after him and found him very bad, and I soon got up to him and got him down by the horns to cut his throat. The first thing I received was a blow from his fore feet on my thigh, which made a nasty bruise; this was because I had let go one horn to get at my knife, and the ground was uneven, and I had to take him from below, as he was on a bank. My hand being damp, before I could secure him firmly again, he twisted his head loose and knocked the back of my right hand with luckily the side of

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his horn, which perfectly paralyzed it for the moment and made it bleed badly. I kicked him on the side of the neck and stunned him, and then Mahomed came up and finished him. I could have finished him with another charge of small shot, but I wanted to keep the skin and the head and did not want to damage it, so I went about the work in the way I did, and got an impression of the animal which will last me some time. My hand was too sore to go on shooting, and I mounted my mule and cantered on to bring up a spare mule to carry the game. I saw the mule reach the place where I left the boys and then went on with some of the officers to camp. The parson was shooting francolin and guinea-fowl, and the doctor "butterflying," and everyone was in good spirits and cheerful, as the country is rather pretty round this district, and there is plenty of sport.

The Adowa hills were getting plainer every day in front of us, and their outline growing more irregular. Halai mountains are still visible to the north-east, our road is also a good deal more west of south; grass in plenty, and there were innumerable flocks of cattle on the neighbouring hills. On the arrival of my game into camp I was disgusted to find that the boys had entirely spoilt the skin by dragging the animal along by its hind legs instead of carrying it, and it had also been badly chafed on the mule, and the horns on the head not having been tied up properly had made a nasty place on the mule's flank. The skin was spoilt; the horns were broken off by some of the members of the mission to make pipe stoppers of, and the only consolation was that the flesh remained all right for the cook's department.

I tried to find out the name of the gazelle from the people of

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the plains, and those that talked Arabic said it was a gazelle; the Abyssinians also said it was a gazelle. I asked them if they were certain it was not a goat, or a sheep, or a pig; no, it was a gazelle, and a gazelle it will remain, the same as all other of the small sorts of gazelle in Abyssinia. The same with the francolin, spur-fowl, and guinea-fowl—they are all chickens; the different doves are all pigeons. In fact, it is a most unsatisfactory country to get natural history news in. The Arabs of the plains are nearly as bad, and they have a perfect want of observation, and only fall back on the wild animals for food when their own domestic animals give out. This refers to those who live near cultivated grounds; the Shikaries and those who live by the chase are generally fairly well informed, and have a fund of information on some subjects. The gazelle weighed about 80 lbs., about the height of the gazelle Dorcas and Arabian animal, but thicker set; the horns were like the chamois, and the colour yellowish brown, the former colour predominating. I gave its description on a former page. Villiers spent the afternoon in sketching, and as I did not care to go out shooting, he asked me if I and my servant Mahomed would mind being sketched in the foreground of a picture he was doing of some of the hills near camp. I had to hold some game in my hand with my gun in the other, and Mahomed was to carry the gazelle over his shoulders and the rifle. Being sketched is worse than being photographed, and the quantity of cigarettes I finished before the operation was over was immense.

Onāhiala is reported to be a good place for shooting. Off early next morning for Adiquala, the road being up hill and over stony ground, the majority of which, however, is cultivated during the rains, and the stones prevent the earth

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from being washed away. Ploughing with the wretched instruments used must be tedious enough, and hard work for the men and cattle employed. We saw a fine troop of dog-faced monkeys on our road; there must have been at least 300 of them of all sizes, from the smallest of babies to the oldest of patriarchs. The natives with me immediately commenced telling me stories about them, not one of which was fit to put on paper; some were amusing, despite this, and certainly were imaginative. After leaving the gorge where the monkeys lived we had to go up and down two very steep ravines, the drainage from which ran nearly due west to the Mareb, and reaching the top of the last ravine, an uphill ride of about a mile brought us to the top of the Adiquala plateau, which is about three miles across by about seven miles in length. It is all cultivated, but the ground is very stony, like that we passed through in the early morning.

Adiquala is a queer little place, with a few good sycamore-figs round its springs. The church is an indifferent one, and the head-man more so; not only is he indifferent, but very impertinent, and as Adiquala is the key to the Mareb valley, Gundet, and an advanced position of Adowa, it is of some importance, and he takes it upon himself to be nasty. The only other northern road to Adowa is *viâ* Kiagour and Gura, the latter place being within an easy day's march of Koodoofalasie, when the Mareb is fordable for eight months of the year. I went and watered my mules at the spring, and a charming damsel gave me some water to drink out of a very dirty gourd. While smoking a cigarette I talked to the people there, who were perfectly civil, and then walked down the village glen and soon chose a camping-ground. I and two sailors, who went ahead of the rest, had

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finished driving in the picketing posts when the "boss" of the place came down with some of the inhabitants to see who we were. He had evidently had a skinful of tedj, and was very noisy. I always keep my temper when a native loses his, and so had an advantage over this gentleman, who was furious, and already, before introduction, made remarks about our being white, which in this country is not civil. After he had threatened us with the anger of the King, and his own anger, and everyone else's, I told him I was delighted to see him, and if he had come to see the Admiral that he would be here shortly, and so would Ras Aloula, and he had better go to meet them or he might get into trouble; that it was a bad thing to be angry so early in the day. So, after a little talking with his town folk, he went off without speaking, and we were left quiet.

As soon as the Admiral came up he found everything ready for him, and the camp soon shook down into order, and a very pretty one it was. The village was at the top of the glen, then came a clear space covered with grass, the village green, then some mules and horses picketed, then the tents scattered about at one's own sweet will, and then the baggage animals on another green open space. The sides of the glen were rocky, and covered with scrub, and before the majority of the mission came up francolin were calling on each side of us, and two or three lots flew across. I went out in the afternoon for my usual shoot, and to get as much exercise as possible, and to be out of the way of the rifle-shooting that was going to take place. Some of the Abyssinian escort were to show their cunning. None of them are good shots, and if there is a thing I dislike looking at it is bad shooting.

I picked up Fitzgerald, who was out for a stroll with

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his gun, and we went on together. This glen is a most curious one, and it is joined by four others that run from the plateau and form a stream that flows south-westerly to the Mareb. The glens are very fine, but the jungle too thick for shooting with any comfort, and part of it perfectly impenetrable. Kudoo, leopard, and gazelle are common, and so are all game birds; the guinea-fowl being very "'cute," running into the jungle and refusing to get up. They are annoying birds, and know as a rule how to take care of themselves; the young birds are easiest got at, but after one or two shots they get as wise as the old ones. I got a splendid family shot on a trip up to Sanheit, and picked up eleven, the result of two barrels. The birds were in a dhurra field, and a man posted me behind a bush in a path which the birds always made for when they were disturbed feeding; the natives drove the guinea-fowl towards me, and I had a splendid shot. I should think the flock was at least 200. This time we had very poor sport, and I got a long shot at a very pretty antelope, which Fitzgerald did not see. To look at it, was like the hog-deer of India.*

Off next morning, a nice cloudy day and cool, for Gundet, the great battle-field of 1874 between the Egyptians and the Abyssinians. I was, as usual, last away from camp, and rode on at a smart canter to get to the pass leading down from the Adiquala plateau to the Gundet valley. Here I caught up the Admiral and his staff. They were holding a consultation on the Admiral's horse, which had been taken ill during the night with horse-fever, and now there was hardly a walk in him. It had already got about 50 yards

* I never saw or heard of a deer in Africa, and I don't believe that they exist, although many travellers in Abyssinia mention having seen them. I think it must be from ignorance of the species, and that all deer in the country are of the gazelle tribe, *i.e.*, never cast their horns.

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down the pass and was blocking the road. I undertook to look after it with my natives Mahomed and Rata and the Admiral's native syce. We coaxed it to walk about another ten yards to a broader part of the pass, and put him against the rock in the shade, and let all the transport get past; before the last animal had got up to us the animal fell, and a yellowish discharge oozed from his nostrils, and the poor brute was evidently in great pain. After he had been down for about twenty minutes he made a final effort to get up, staggered for about twenty yards, and then fell with his head hanging over a ledge with a drop of about thirty feet into some bushes. I waited another ten minutes, and then got Mahomed to put him out of his misery with a charge of shot in his temple, and the poor brute rolled over the ledge into the bushes below, to become food for the vultures and hyenas. The syce cut off part of the tail to make a fly-whisk for the Admiral. The Admiral was very sorry to lose the horse as it was a good one and quiet, and he had ridden him at the battle of El Teb.

While remaining behind I enjoyed the splendid view of the Gundet valley, which on three sides is backed by nearly perpendicular cliffs of a great height. On one cliff to the west and about the highest part is a most peculiar pinnacle rock with a stone on the top that makes it look like a giant table. It is a splendid landmark, and can be seen for miles. The south front of the valley is open, and the line of the Mareb river can be distinctly traced coming from the east, running for a short way south, and then turning due west, which course it runs for a long way, till it makes a north-westerly bend, on which course it keeps till it gets into the Soudan, when it is called the Gash, and passes Cassala and Filik (the headquarters of the Hadendowie tribe),

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and then joins the Atbara about 80 miles from its junction with the Nile. The road made by the Egyptians in 1875 is most marked from the height above, they having cleared a broad track from half-way down the pass right up to Gundet, where they had a very strong zarebaed position. I, luckily, had the Abyssinian soldier Rata with me, who had been present at the engagement and the pursuit of the fugitive Egyptians up the pass of Adiquala, and a very good description he gave me of the battle, confirming all the reports I had heard of it before, and what I wrote about it in 1877, when I was Vice-Consul, and went to Sanheit to meet Colonel Gordon. The report I made then I was thanked for by the Secretary of State, and from that time to this I have always taken a great interest in Abyssinian politics and the future development of the country. The pass is about 600 feet high and a perfect zig-zag the whole way up except for the last 500 yards. Rata immediately took me away from the road as the line of flight was not along it, but in a bee-line to the foot of the pass through the bush. King John has given strict orders that neither the battle fields of Gura or Gundet are to be touched, nor the bones of the Egyptians—or, as he calls them, Turks—are to be buried. No trader can get into his country without passing one of the two roads on which the battles were fought, and he thinks that they will act in a certain measure as an advertisement, and also as a warning to others who wish to attack his country again.

Soon after turning into the bush skulls and bones are visible, but not in any great numbers until some isolated rocks are reached. These rocks are covered with bushes, and offer many places for concealment; in nearly every one are two or three skeletons, showing the places where the

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Egyptians tried to hide and where they were killed. From this spot through the bush the *débris* of human remains were thicker until the central Egyptian position was reached where the great slaughter took place. The Egyptian position stretched about half-way across the valley, occupying the centre of it; their flanks were well protected by ridges of rock covered with bush, and the centre was also very strong, having many rocks which were impossible to climb.

The whole position in front was fairly clear, and the wells were also swept by artillery and musketry fire. The whole position was joined up by a thick zareba hedge of thorns. The Abyssinians attacked the front of the position and got round both flanks through the bush at the same time, and leaving both flanks unengaged, thereby getting to the rear of the Egyptian position. Those of the Egyptians who could get away went to the rear as fast as possible; part of the flanks were driven in on the centre, and the Abyssinians surrounded them, and then the massacre took place. Both Arendrup and Arekeel Beys, a Dane and a Copt, or Armenian, were said to have been killed here. The rocks and the bush are strewn with skulls, some of which are in a good state of preservation; in some places they lie in dozens. Round one very wooded clump of rocks, about 250 yards from the wells, they touch each other. The Abyssinians lost very heavily in the front attack, but had hardly a man killed on the flanks. The battle took place, I think, on the 7th November, 1875, and, curiously enough, it was on the same day that Munzinger and his wife and child were killed, and his force entirely defeated between Lakes Ausa and Abhebad, by the Danakils, on his march up country to join Menelek, King of Shoa, who had agreed to attack Abyssinia on the south. Munzinger went in from Tajurreh.

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Munzinger was the chief mover against King John, and it was through him that Egypt tried to annex the Bogos and Hamasen countries and make a frontier of the river Mareb. This would have given Egypt the whole of the north of Abyssinia, the Halai and Senafé districts, the Shoho country, and the Danakil country, and it was evident, by Munzinger's going to Shoa, that he aimed at taking the whole of Abyssinia, and Shoa as well, and making Egyptian territory of everything between Cape Guardafin and Suez, and the interior to the Lakes Albert and Victoria Nyanza. Whether it was his idea or that of some inventive genius in Cairo history will never disclose. No enemy was ever treated with such contempt as the Egyptians treated theirs; their Intelligence Department was altogether at fault, and the campaign must have been planned by madmen. It showed lamentable ignorance and folly hardly to be understood when they had European officers and military advisers in Egypt of long service. The first lesson was hard enough, and ought to have been taken to heart, and the second expedition was folly itself and fared worse than the first. As far as the butcher's bill was concerned it was big enough to please all parties, and as for the bill for payment and expenses it will take a long time to wipe out. It must have formed no small portion of Egypt's national debt, and a source of interest, or no interest, whichever it may be, for the bondholders; but eventually it will come out of the pockets of the relations of those soldiers who were killed fighting an enemy they did not want to fight, and the fellaheen will have to bear the brunt of the penalty. It was a great pity that the public were kept ignorant of the real Egyptian frontier policy during the years they carried it on, and General Gordon was too busy to carry out what he intended, and even under his rule dis-

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graceful acts took place on behalf of the Egyptian officials, for which, however, he was not responsible.

After leaving the battle field the bed of the Guidi-Guidi is reached. It is dry in this season, but there are plenty of wells in the river's bed. The battle at Gundet is sometimes called after the river, along the banks of which a great deal of fighting took place, and the Guidi-Guidi strikes the Mareb near where the advance guard of the Egyptian army was defeated. We pitched camp on some rising ground about the centre of the valley, and between some wells and some small hills on which there stood a number of houses. The road from the wells ran past the camp. We had a pretty view and a very comfortable camping ground, and there was plenty of game. The Admiral shot two hares quite close to his tent, and the natives told us that there was plenty of game. I had seen in the morning several dig-dig, and had shot some francolin.

We had a visit from several very pretty water-girls, three of whom Villiers consigned to paper, and they made a very nice sketch. They got several pocket handkerchiefs given them, and the Admiral amused himself by seeing one of them dressed out with the help of old Bru, the interpreter. She had two handkerchiefs for a petticoat, one round her shoulders as a shawl, and another as a turban, and she left a great swell, and the admiration of the other female villagers, who, I daresay, wished they had been so favoured. Ras Aloula was to arrive in the evening on his way to Adowa, and then to the King at Micalay, where there is a new house building for him. It is a favourite spot of his, and he intends making a large town there. It is in the Inderta province, which is governed by old Ras Areya, the King's uncle, who is the only troublesome

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governor there is, and it may be politic on the King's part to be near him. The capital of the Inderta province was Chelicut, but it has been changed to Micalay. Ras Areya, as I mentioned before, is Debbub's father, and the young gentleman was carrying on his games in the Shoho country, which is not so far from Chelicut and is a convenient place to make raids from.

I did not see Ras Aloula, as I was out shooting, and a very pretty walk I had; there is any quantity of game, and I got some hares, guinea-fowl, francolin, and two bustard. Part of the shooting was very thick, and although I saw lots of gazelle of two sorts I could not get a shot at them, as they were so wild. When at about sunset I got back to camp I found the usual present of food from Ras Aloula and a big horn of tedj. But after dinner I found the tedj gone, the horn empty, and Ali absent. I knew what had taken place. The ground in camp was very damp from the rain, and the tent pegs were not holding well. I made everything comfortable for the night, and just before I turned in a stray mule stumbled over the ropes and nearly brought the tent down. I went out and put things straight and turned in just as the rain came down. A bell tent is a beast at all times. Luckily I had taken the precaution to put all my kit together on stones that kept it about six inches from the ground, and I had a lot of grass cut to put my waterproof bed on.

About three o'clock in the morning my tent came down with a flop on the top of me, and, of course, awoke me with a start, and my servant was calling on God and his prophet to protect him. It was raining, and impossible to stick the tent up, so I half propped the pole up, and with some sticks kept the canvas up and smoked

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till daylight, and I was not sorry to see it cease raining and the sun get up. It was impossible to start that morning, as the tents were too wet and heavy for the mules, and a lot of things wanted drying throughout camp. We lost a mule that morning, found dead in the lines from horse sickness. Ras Aloula had gone on, and he sent a message to say that we might find some difficulty in getting supplies through the country which we had to pass, as the ground after crossing the Mareb belonged to the priests, which is exempt from taxation, and they are very stingy to strangers and to the soldiers. Ali was found with a Bashi Bazouk friend of his under a tree about sixty yards from camp; they had both got dead drunk off tedj and had slept through the rain, and nice specimens they looked! I sent Ali to get stick at the mule lines and arranged with Mason Bey that he should hereafter be a mule-driver, and forbade him to come near me. I was glad to get rid of him, as he was a useless brute out of the house. He could wait at table, and was an example of a servant who had mixed with Egyptians, from whom he had learnt civilization. It is curious how Egyptians spoil and contaminate everything they have to do with; and until the world recognizes that they are only fit for cultivators, and that they never have been nor ever will be able to govern themselves and take care of their country—the better for them and the better for the world.

We were off early next morning, as we had the longest march to do that we have as yet made. Part of the road was reported to be bad; the Mareb had to be crossed. At this season, when heavy showers are frequent in the neighbouring mountains, one can never tell when a rush of water will come down, or whether one will be detained till the river

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falls and the ford is passable. Soon after leaving Gundet the eastern portion of the spur forming the valley has to be crossed, and the descent is over a stony road and then down into a cultivated valley, the Guidi-Guidi running in the centre, its banks being covered with acacia and other trees. The road, which follows the water-course, is in places pleasantly shady, and after leaving the water-course it runs gradually down to the Mareb, through thick mimosa scrub, from the banks towards the river. The Egyptians in 1875 here cut a broad road, clearing the bushes on each side, the traces of which are still plainly visible till quite close to the Mareb, where their work was abruptly terminated by the Abyssinian attack.

Soon after leaving the banks of the Guidi-Guidi we came across remains of human beings, which got more numerous as we neared the Mareb. On the battle-field, which is broken ground, there are numbers, and round where the cannon were taken they lie still thicker. Count Zichy, an Austrian, was wounded here and taken prisoner and died a few days after from his wounds. King John treated him as well as he could. The firing during the battle was plainly heard at Gundet, so the troops there must have been well prepared for the Abyssinians, and the poor stand they made and the way in which they allowed both flanks to be turned is the more inexplicable. It is a good eight to nine miles from the place where the first engagement took place to their permanent position at Gundet. The great feature of every Egyptian battle field, as far as I have been able to make out, is always a lot of dead in one place, where the attack first commences, and then a long line of some miles pointing for home of dead bodies, getting less and less in number till they cease altogether.

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The road down to the Mareb is steep, and the northern banks of the river are much higher than the southern, and covered with tall trees. The ford is immediately at the foot of the hill, and the water about 40 yards wide where we crossed and about 2½ feet deep, and slightly discoloured by the rain. The bed of the river is about 150 yards across, and when the rains are falling heavily in the country, and the river running in flood, the march must be a torrent of over 400 yards broad. The bed of the river is thickly covered with the common "usha," which grows to a great height, and is dotted here and there with large forest trees. Among them I came across india-rubber trees for the first time. They seem to be very numerous further down the river, where the jungle becomes thick and the high banks of the river become closer. I came across plenty of the ficus elastica, also four or five very fine specimens of the india-rubber vine growing up the forest trees, and where the Admiral remained for breakfast, under a big tree, there was a very fine vine indeed growing up it, with a thick stem. The natives do not know its value, and they never make use of it for anything. The children, however, collect the milk and make balls for playing with, and the majority of their hockey balls are of india-rubber.

The tamarind tree is also pretty common round here, and grows to a great size, giving a delightful shade. The Mareb Valley is supposed to be very feverish, and the natives refuse to sleep a night in it if they can possibly help it. It is, therefore, uninhabited. The natives say it is the elephants' high road from the low country to the Halai district, and that during certain times of the year they pass to and fro along the river, and that other elephants migrate from and to the Halai district *viâ* Ginda to the Ainseba,

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and then on to the low country. From the Mareb River a village on a very high hill to the south-east can be seen about two miles off. The road, after leaving the bed of the river, goes up hill over rather broken country, with cultivated fields on each side. The fields are zarebaed with a rough hedge of thorns—the first I have seen—a sure sign of big game being about at crop time. In each field there were look-out places built to keep the animals from the crops. Fields of this description are the first we have seen since we crossed the frontier. The cultivators live several miles off.

After about three miles more of hilly country the La-la plain is reached, which is alternate scrub and cultivated ground. There is a fair quantity of grass, and many cows, the more cultivated part of the plain being nearest to Adowa. From La-la Plain a good view of some of the mountains near Adowa is obtainable. A ride of another five miles brings one to the running water of La-la, a pretty brook-like stream, which looks trouty in many places. The speckled beauty, however, does not exist, and his place is taken by a fish half-barbel, half-chub that rises at flies and takes the worm; the natives catch them in cast nets. The fish is not bad eating, but rather bony. The camping ground at La-la is very pretty, being a series of green lawns, divided by groves of trees; the grass is very good, and the place could hardly be surpassed as a resting-place. The running water is distinctly audible, and has a soothing effect. Innumerable francolin were walking about the lawns, and calling to each other, and a heronry in the neighbouring trees was a source of amusement to watch, as I lay under a shady tree smoking my cigarette waiting to know whether camp should be pitched here or to go another hour and a half's further march

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to Daro-tchlai, the property of the priests. I was for remaining behind at La-la, but the orders were to go on to Daro-tchlai, so as to make the march next day into Adowa as short as possible, as it is a long march and a nasty pass to get up immediately after leaving Daro-tchlai.

We arrived at our camping ground after an hour's march, and this time we had a choice of two fallow fields to camp in, and we chose the flatter of the two, which, however, was rather lumpy, and a wretched place as far as tent-pitching and walking were concerned. It only wanted a good shower of rain to make it sticky, and the tent pegs to draw, and we should have had a "high old time" of it. The La-la ran at the bottom of the field, giving us plenty of water and a nice pool or two to bathe in. One pool was inhabited by a perfect colony of kingfishers that had a good feeding ground as the water was full of small fish. We were all pretty tired by evening, and the bag during the day had not been a good one, nothing to show but a few guinea-fowl and francolin got coming along the road. I had not finished tent-pitching till too late to go for my usual stroll. I had dinner, and then turned in. While trying to get the floor of my tent into something like order for putting my bed out I got stung on the finger of my right hand by a small grey scorpion, and the pain was instantaneous and intense, running right up my arm to my neck. I sucked it as long as I could till the blood came freely, and went to the "hakeem" for some ammonia, which could not be found. I felt quite faint; had a good peg of brandy, but it was a long time before I could get to sleep, and fancied everything I touched was a scorpion.

We were all very glad to get away in the morning and leave the priests, their country, and the scorpions

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behind. We could not buy anything for the animals to eat, nor did the priests send presents or offer to sell us sheep or bullocks. I was the last away that morning, and took particular good care that my animals were properly laden, as I had to catch up and pass everyone to get into Adowa to arrange about a camping ground, which would be a permanent one, as the Admiral had no idea how long he was going to be there, and did not intend going any further to see King John, who, I daresay, would not have been sorry if the Admiral had agreed to go on to Micalay in the Inderta province. The road up the Daratchlai mountain is in places very bad, and a slip over the side would in most places make a nasty fall, and in one or two places a cropper would mean the last of one, for the fall on the rocks below would soon knock all life out of the unfortunate victim.

The view in places is beautiful, and we were lucky in having a clear day, although cloudy, for it added greatly to the landscape, making fine lights and shades. At the top of the pass I found Villiers sketching the view, which really beggars description—a perfect panorama of the country we have been travelling across from Asmara—to the north-east a perfect view of the distant Halai range, then nearly due north the group of hills and plateau, commencing with Checut, Addetchlai to Zazaga, and then nearly due north-west the mountains running towards Wolkeit, old Bru the interpreter's country; then the plateau of Adiquala, which fills in part of the central middle of the picture, till it falls away to the Mareb Valley eastwards, and its abrupt drop westward to the same valley. The two spurs forming the Gundet Valley are most pronounced, the western one with its high pinnacle and table rock being plainly visible, and not

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looking the ten hours' march that it is from here. The nearer part of the picture is filled in with the La-la plain, its water-courses and cultivated fields, and immediately under us a valley of cultivated ground; to the extreme west a range of mountains dividing the water-shed of the Mareb and the Tacazze Rivers; and due east, after the Halai group, the mountains round Senafe till they are shut out of view by the near mountain spurs and heights that form the birthplace of the Assam River, which runs past Adowa, and empties itself into the Tacazze.

In front of us are still the peculiar isolated mountains round Adowa, and it is a perfect conjecture as to which way the road takes to get through them, as they so far seem to have no opening whatever. On getting to the top of the pass the road runs along perfectly level on the side of a hill towards two small churches and a village. When these are reached the road goes down hill for some way, with one particularly nasty water-course to descend and ascend. Passing this, cultivated ground is again reached, with fields with hedges round them to keep the gazelle and cattle out; then about a mile and a half of alternate scrub and grass land, with only a few fields and a small valley, studded with very large trees, is reached with a hill, and on getting to the top of this a view of Adi-Aboona, the residence of the Aboona, or High Priest of Abyssinia, is obtained; another mile and the road runs within a quarter of a mile of the village of Adi-Aboona, which is a very picturesque and medieval group of buildings. Between the village and the brook that meanders round the hill and through the plain are cultivated fields, and immediately on the banks of the brook were several small patches of different grains—wheat, barley,

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and oats—in different stages of growth, from half grown to nearly ripe, one field of barley being yellow. The crop was a thin one, but the grain of very good quality and bright looking. The brook had to be crossed and was about two feet deep.

Immediately below the crossing place was a bank of vegetation that seemed familiar to me, and on going up to it there was no mistaking what it was, namely, the common water-cress. I immediately began eating it, and very nice and crisp and cooling it was. A Doctor Schimper, a German botanist, who settled in the country many years ago, and died here, had imported the seeds of the plant and sown them in the brooks round Adowa, and the plant has become quite acclimatized, and is called by the Abyssinians "Schimper," after the doctor, whose name will live in the country long after he is forgotten. The doctor took unto himself a wife, and had a small family. The son, now about thirty to thirty-five years old, was educated in Germany, and the daughters have married well. Young Schimper on the last occasion I heard of him was with the King. He is a very good specimen of a cross between the European and the Abyssinian, a strong, broad-shouldered man, and very intelligent. I had many a long talk with him in 1876 at Massowah.*

The monastery of Adi-Aboona is on the top of the hill above the village. It is a large series of buildings, surrounded by high walls covered with creepers; there are many large trees and the usual fine specimens of the candelabra euphorbia, and the whole group of buildings and vegetation look very well at a distance, producing a peaceable and quiet effect.

* Young Schimper served with the Germans during the 1870 campaigns, and saw a great deal of service. He is now one of King John's military officers.

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The houses in the village are not very close together, and in the compounds are many trees, some of them apricot, peach, plum, and fig, with an occasional grape vine, which gives a homely look to the place. There are one or two houses with a second building on the top of the usual ground floor. The tops of the houses are roofed with large flat stones which overhang the walls; the crevices between the stones are filled with vegetation of different sorts, which gives them a garden-like appearance.

Up the valley towards Adowa the distance between the hills that form the valley may be at most a mile to a mile and a half. The centre of the valley is a broken and rocky bed, with a stream flowing from Adi-Aboona; on each side of the stream are fields in fallow, and nearer the foot of the hill sparse scrub. There is not a tree of any size to be seen except two or three at the end of the valley in the cemetery near the high road. One or two isolated houses and farmsteads are to be seen on the hill sides, but nothing of Adowa. About a mile further on the brass cross and brass top of the dome of the Church of the Holy Trinity appear above the spur of an outjutting hill, on rounding which a view of Adowa is obtained.

The town is built on a series of small hills, six in number. Its aspect is curious, though far from ugly, and the fine peaks at the east and south-east of the town which have been such a feature in the landscape for the last few days are seen in all their beauty. The five churches are distinctly visible with their surrounding groves of trees. The smallest trees are round that of the Holy Trinity. The other churches are called the Church of Our Saviour, the Church of the Holy Virgin, and the Churches of St. Michael and St. George, the two latter

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being outside to the east; the Church of Our Saviour being in the centre part; that of the Holy Trinity, which is the largest and finest, to the west, on the highest point, and that of the Holy Virgin, St. Miriam, which is the smallest, to the south of the town, on its outskirts with a high hill behind it, which forms a background to the greater part of Adowa. The whole place is irregularly laid out, and from the outside, at about half a mile distance, where I pulled up near the cemetery, not a vestige of a street is to be seen.

The valley on the side of which Adowa is built runs due east to the heights, many small valleys running down and joining the large one. The distance across averages from one mile and a half to two miles and a half; it opens out westward, where it is joined westwards by other valleys; to the south-west it closes in to about half a mile, where the Assam River can be traced on its way south to south-west to join the Tacazze, and again nearly due west the valley keeps pretty wide, the road to Axum being down its centre. To the east there are few cultivated fields, but plenty of vivid green pasture land; to the west nothing but fields in fallow, guileless of hedges or boundaries. The want of timber trees to enrich the scenery is greatly felt, and the only trees are those in the town and round the churches, with a few candelabra euphorbia round the houses on the hill sides, and the scrub of a goodly size on the mountains, which during the rains gives a green aspect to the otherwise rugged brown prevailing. The picture is rich in browns and reddish browns in the dry season, when all the fields are in fallow. I should much like to see it in crop time when the different colours of the crops would give a charming colouring.

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I rode west to see by any chance if there was camping ground, no official from the town having turned up to receive us, and found only a choice of ploughed fields, so made east past the face of the town from which we were divided by the Assam River to the ford to cross over and go up a valley to the east of the town, which looked a pretty one, and full of beautiful green grass. The banks of the river are very steep, and where the ford is situated the two banks are not more than forty yards across, the stream running through a gully which is impassable during the rains. Now the water forms a small silver thread, bubbling over the stones that divide the different pools; the road down the banks on each side are very steep and the bed may be about fifteen yards across at most. The good people of Adowa have to make a long detour of nearly two miles during the rains to reach the road leading to Adi-Aboona, and also if they want to go to the Church of St. Michael, which is not three hundred yards from the nearest house in the town. The road up from the ford leads on to the village green of Adowa, a nice level bit of lawn turf which would make a first-rate cricket or lawn tennis ground. The green is surrounded on the west side by the town, on the south by some detached houses and gardens with hedges round them, on the east by open ploughed fields, and on the north by the branch of the Assam River; the length is about 500 by 300 yards, and it plays an important part in the daily business of the town. When I arrived an exciting game of hockey was going on, and I am afraid the arrival of strangers spoilt it, and made the side nearest us lose a goal, as we were soon surrounded by an admiring crowd of those taking part in the game, who were eager to know to which country of pale faces we belonged.

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We made our way to the grass we had seen up the valley, which was about 400 yards off, and there were only a few cattle grazing on it. It did not take us long to off saddle and turn our mules into the grass, and we out with pipes and cigarettes and commenced to smoke, enjoying the view and taking stock of our destination which was to be our abode for some time, and thinking it very strange that no one had turned up to receive us. We were aroused from our comfortable lounge by the jabbering of Abyssinian soldiers, one of whom had drawn his long curved sword and seemed as if he was going to reap the mules at their knees and the mule-drivers at the neck, and knock spots into everything and everybody. Small Bru got between three or four of us for safety, as he was the only Abyssinian amongst the party. One-eyed Mahomed looked as if he would like to have given the soldiers the contents of my gun, and it was some time before I could find out what was the matter. I found we were committing the awful crime of being in the King's grass. We immediately moved, and the soldier with his sword was getting more and more impertinent, so I asked whether by any wonderful chance he was the King. I suggested being in Adowa, where he came from, was not looking after his work, and that he should clear the other beasts out of the grass, and mentioned that there was such a person as Ras Aloula, on mention of whose name he quieted down. The name of Ras Aloula has a soothing effect on an insolent soldier. The Admiral presently appeared in sight, some way off, with two rather cleaner Abyssinians with a beery or tedjy look about them, who addressed us in excellent English. They turned out to be Ledj Mertcha and Ledj Meshesha, the King's English interpreters.*

* Since writing this they have been to England as the King's ambassadors.

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On the Admiral arriving we were taken to the top of the grass field and told to choose a camp, and we finally fixed upon a spot in some fallow fields which suited very well, the only drawback to it being a high road through it which led to Micalay, and a water-course to the left of the camp, with certain marks on the ground, which showed us there was a fair surface drainage through the camp which would not be agreeable during the rains. The Admiral had his tent put up facing the grass field, some 200 yards distant, forming a nice level lawn of good grass all round his tent. The camp spread out irregularly to the rear of his tent, and Mason Bey and Villiers, with the Egyptian staff, settled on the banks of the water-course, there being a straight drop of about thirty feet from the field. The servants' tents completed the irregular circle, and were furthest away from the Admiral's tent. My tent and that of old Bru were immediately to the right, and Graham's stood on a rise above about 70 yards in advance of his. The space between the two was a nice level lawn which we immediately named the quarter-deck. It was always kept very clean, and here the Admiral used to sit in the afternoons and receive his guests. It took us some days to get camp in order, and, in lieu of bricks and mortar, houses were built of sticks and grass.

The natives make first-rate thatched houses. They are very comfortable, and the mess house, Admiral's house, and Mason Bey's were a great success, and much cooler than the tents, and, with a little management, perfectly waterproof. I never saw a comfortable English tent for hot climates, and English makers have a lot to learn from Indian manufacturers, who by far excel them. The Egyptian tents are pretty to look at; their utility is limited, as they keep out no sun, are hot and stuffy in hot weather, and cold

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and draughty in wet. By far the best tent for a single individual is a small double tent lined with any colour of neutral tint, and with a little trouble in pitching it can be made perfectly sun and rain proof. The tent should never be more than a mule load, say at the outside, with all fittings, 200lbs. A good Indian maker will turn out an article in every way suited to the plains and hills. For a long stay, however, I should recommend travellers or sportsmen to go in for a native roofed hut as an adjunct to the tent. If possible, always get your tent made without walls if you want to travel light, and pitch and break camp every day.

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CHAPTER XIII.

DOMESTIC LIFE AT ADOWA.

As our stay was from the 26th April till the 4th June at Adowa we had plenty of time on hand, and for those who hardly ever went out of camp and had no amusement the stay was scarcely a treat. I was always in for a day's shooting, or a day's ride, and saw what there was to be seen. Being in no service, and knowing the people and their habits, I got a great deal more freedom and diversion than other members of the mission. I can only say the treatment you receive depends on how you treat the people. During the time I was at Adowa in no excursion I made was I ever insulted once, and the members of the mission that used to shoot with me can say the same. The bluntness of uncivilized people is not intended as an insult, and from what I have seen of natives they are not so bad as the lowest class of Englishmen; indeed, most of them compare favourably with our countrymen and continentals.

I shall only give a *résumé* of what took place during our sojourn at Adowa. There are some interesting rides and fair sport to be had, and I cannot say that I did not enjoy myself, although we were there at about the worst time and

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during the hottest part of the year. The daily routine of meals at nine, one, and half-past seven o'clock split the day up for most of the mission into feeding, sleeping, and smoking periods, and left little time for exercise. The life was not conducive to good training, and it was a perfect "God-send" when the King arrived, as he camped some way off on a hill, and the walk up and down to visit His Highness took up part of the time. The receptions, too, were a novelty, and gave us some new topic of conversation.

The town of Adowa is a curious collection of houses; the majority of them are built of rough stones, and the rest of grass and mats. Streets in the town there are none worth the name, and the broadest is not more than twenty feet across. The means of communication from one part to the other are by the narrowest of lanes, some of them so narrow that it is with difficulty two animals can pass each other, and in some places it is even difficult to turn one's mule. I got caught on several occasions, and always sent one-eyed Mahomed before me, who generally managed to make everyone go back for me. On one occasion there was a very large horned bullock in possession of the alley, which caused me to dismount and go into a house, mule and all, in order to let him pass. It is a good thing that the animals of the country are so docile, as were they otherwise, being chased through Adowa by a mad bullock would not be the most enjoyable fun. The streets, as a rule, are disgracefully dirty, and all the refuse of the houses, including bones of slaughtered animals, are thrown out of doors and left to the mercy of dogs, vultures, and hyenas.

I often thought what fun one could have on a moonlight night with a few good dogs hunting the hyenas, of which there are swarms, through the streets, and what a pande-

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monium would be the result. The hyenas are the best municipal workers in the place, and I have been down a street in the afternoon and seen a dead bullock or a dead mule on the ground and passed the next morning and found only a few bones left. What the town would do without these scavengers I don't know. As it is they have hard jaw-work to keep pace with the supply of filth thrown out by the inhabitants. Some of the streets in places are very picturesque, following water-courses that run out of the town in the hillside. Several of them have high banks with trees, grass, and flowers on each side, and are shady, and would be pleasant if it was not for the smell.

The street that follows the water-course running from the Church of the Holy Virgin at the top of the town to the Assam River, which is at its lower part, and runs between the two hills, on which are situated the Church of Our Saviour and that of the Holy Trinity, is really pretty, and offers some charming models for rustic painting. The whole way is nearly all in shade, here a big tree hanging over the road where it runs between two high banks; then a few fruit trees—apricots, peaches, or figs—with an occasional banana topping the walls of some enclosure; then a rustic fence made out of reeds, with wild flowers and tangled grass, walls built of stones, irregular in shape and irregular in build, the interstices between the stones full of moss, ferns, grass, and wild flowers, which are now in a withered condition, owing to the great heat. Not thirty yards of the road are straight; one is always descending, with here and there a glimpse below of the Assam River winding along through the fallow fields. Of course, it is easier coming down than going up, and the view is prettier, but still the background of the high hill behind Adowa and the peeps here and

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there of blue sky between the trees would make an effective sketch. The main road runs round the town to the south, and branches off to the west on its way to Assam. The houses facing it have nearly all compounds and gardens, and, as in London, the west part of the town seems to be the quietest quarter.

The houses on the banks and overlooking the banks of the Assam are the most picturesque and curious. The majority have a top storey, and two that I saw had two storeys, which, however, did not look very safe, as the buildings were out of the perpendicular, with a tendency to lean too much over the river to be comfortable. The grass and mat houses need no description. As an insurance risk they would be bad investments. We had two big fires during our stay, and huts of this kind must be rather exciting to live in, especially when one's neighbours' domiciles are of the same material. The Abyssinian is fond of getting drunk and going to bed in his clothes, and I daresay would in his boots if he wore them. A lamp upset and his house is in a blaze, and with a wind in the right quarter to fan the flames a clearance of a few blocks is soon effected.

Ledge Mertcha's and Ledge Meshesha's is a good example of a round-built stone house, with a thatched bee-hive roof; it stands in a compound of about forty or fifty yards square, surrounded by high stone walls. The compound is entered by a doorway with a very low lintel not tall enough to allow riding through on mule back with ease. The door is of roughly hewn planks, kept together with hide. There is a porch, which the grooms or the servants that accompany visitors generally use as a shelter from the sun or the inclemency of the weather. In the corner of this porch is

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usually a cooking-place, and the porch may be about ten to eighteen feet wide by from six to twelve feet in depth. No doubt in olden times the porch was the first line of defence, and guards always slept there. Inside the compound were a few outhouses to shelter mules and cattle of all descriptions, with chickens straying about of their own free will. In the left-hand corner was the house, built rather close to the boundary walls, but leaving a space between; there was one door leading to the compound, and another leading into an inner enclosure, which contained the cooking-house and the female servants' apartments.

The interior of these round houses is peculiar. There are four rooms, built up with a passage between, the passages being about sixteen feet broad; they cross the whole building and form the centre part into a true cross. The two rooms on each side of the entrance to the compound are used as stables, the rooms being closed by a bar to prevent the animals getting out. The other rooms are used as store-rooms for the house and for the younger branches of the family, who roost or sleep with the chickens and the sitting hens. Beams cross the passages at about ten feet high. From these curtains are sometimes hung, making the parts screened off into other rooms, giving a little privacy to the married couples who inhabit the house. The floors are of mud and cowdung mixed and beaten down hard. They are generally covered with fresh grass, which looks nice, and when changed frequently, not uncleanly; but when left as the Abyssinians are in the habit of leaving it for some time in wet weather, the smell is not that of "new-mown hay."

The roof is generally well built; the beams are made as a rule of the candelabra euphorbia, the thatching is first of rushes and then of straw. In old houses the whole roof is

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black or rich dark brown from the smoke from the wood fires burned in winter time. The wood is generally placed in an iron tray in the centre of the house. The windows are guileless of glass, and are closed with shutters, so that on a damp winter's night, what with doors and windows closed, a smoky fire, and a good many inmates, the smell of smoke and vegetable matter from the damp rushes, and the stewed stable effluvia, the night's rest may be imagined. The windows—of which there are generally two big and four small over the big ones—and doors are left open in summer time. The small ones in winter are nearly closed with rubbish, leaving only a small aperture to let the smoke escape, and the big ones are closed with shutters.

The carpentering throughout the house is of the roughest description, and the work is done by Abyssinians of Mahomedan descent. Some of the carpenters have a good notion of their work, but they lack neatness, and their tools are of poor quality. Were there a demand for good carpentering there is no doubt that it would be supplied, and I have seen some very creditable work done by pupils of the French and Swedish missions of Sanheit, Mensa, and Moncollon. The walls of the houses are generally covered with arms and saddles, and other belongings, and are hung on cow-horns of all sizes let into the walls when the houses are built. Shelves are a rarity.

Ledge Mertcha and Ledge Meshesha, having been educated in Bombay, might, one would have thought, have brought some civilized ideas back to their country, but there was nothing in their houses with the exception of some English books to show that they had ever been out of their mountains. Nor was their house such a pattern of cleanliness to do credit to their foreign experience, and one still

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had, after paying them visits, which took place three or four times a week, that unpleasant irritation which is experienced after a few minutes' stay in any Abyssinian house. The portion railed off from the compound contained a few fruit trees, kept in wretched condition, a vine or two in a neglected state, a cook-house, store-house, with a top storey, where the females did their work of sewing, spinning, &c. Another corner of the compound contained a couple of stacks of inferior hay. The compound was very dirty, and wanted sweeping badly. As house-owners and house-wives the Abyssinians have a lot to learn, and as gardeners and fruit growers they are not a success. Their gardens as a rule are of the Watt's Sluggard kind.

Another house was that of one of the commanders of the King's body-guard, whose father was an Englishman. Perhaps the father would not like his name mentioned. One thing he need not be ashamed of, viz., what he has left behind, as his son is one of the finest men I saw in Abyssinia, and the cross in this case is not the failure it has been with some other Europeans. The son is extremely intelligent, very friendly and hospitable in his own house, but for political reasons he did not visit the camp. His property is situated on a high part of the lower town, and consists of a building with two rooms above the ground floor, approached by a stone staircase; the lower rooms opened into the compound, which was not overlooked by the neighbouring houses. The stables and baking-house are under one roof, the other outhouses contain stores and cook-room, and entirely fill the side of the enclosure opposite the door. The right hand side was occupied by the dwelling-house, the female portion of the establishment living below.

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When Villiers, old Bru, and I entered they were busy at their domestic duties, some grinding grain, others weaving and working embroidery. Our host received us, and took us upstairs to his own rooms. The reception-room in which we sat down was about fourteen feet long by about ten broad, and eight feet high; the roof was flat; the walls were plastered in a rough fashion with mud, and washed over with a yellowish-white compound, which might be anything. An angareb, two or three wooden boxes round the walls, and a divan occupied the side on which the two windows looked out into the street and across the roofs of the lower-lying houses. The divan was covered with the ordinary native red and white shamma and an inferior gaudy Smyrna rug, and several more of these very vulgar looking carpets were also on the floor. The walls of the room had the usual cow-horns protruding from them, on which were hung a perfect arsenal of arms, and one very good silver embossed shield. A small looking-glass of the cheapest description, which reflected a gross caricature of anyone using it, and calculated also to give one the jumps if made use of for shaving, a few pictures of saints whose acquaintance I had never made before, and a crucifix and rosary completed the fittings. The top room is an improvement on the others, as it is generally much cleaner and more airy, and escapes the ground-floor smells.

We were served with tedj out of the usual glass ornamental bottles that are manufactured in Bohemia, and are a peculiar trade of this country; they are like bottle-shaped flower-glasses, with very long necks, and of different colours; the more expensive ones have pictures on them of German young ladies, and raised gold patterns and glass beads representing precious stones. When paying visits to the

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Abyssinians the only refreshment they offer is tedj; coffee is seldom drunk, and tea is unknown. After a chat with our host on different subjects, the most interesting to him being the object of the mission, and how the dervishes were getting on in the Soudan, and if there was any chance of their attacking Abyssinia, we bade adieu, and were told to come when we liked, and that Villiers could make sketches if he liked of the house and its belongings. So the domestic part of the establishment was sketched by him, and he did a very good picture of three females grinding different sorts of grain into flour to make the white, brown, and black bread used by the people of the country.

The grinding-stones are curious. They are of stone, both floor and rubber; the latter round and long, or flat and oval. The floor is built in on an angle about 30° to a square erection; the top part is where the grain is put, and it is run down gently. The flour when ground, together with the husk, falls to the lower part, where there is a small hole with a spout that runs the flour into a basket placed for its reception. There were three of these grinding places in the out-house adjoining the stables, and were used for different sorts of grain. The next room was a store-room, in which sundry rude implements of agriculture, and many earthen jars to hold grain, were kept.

The lower rooms of the main building contained the cooking place, which was on a raised daïs, several angarebs, and mud divans covered with native tanned ox skins of a rich brown colour. The walls were ornamented with the usual cow-horns, on which were hung baskets, dish covers, leather bags, and bottles made of grass, and ordinary beer or wine bottles, covered with hide, and the usual copper and iron dishes for ordinary culinary purposes.

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The females of the country work very well in grass; some of the baskets are beautifully made of different sorts of coloured grass and fibres let in in patterns. The dish covers are also handsome and show great taste; they also are woven of grass and ornamented with kid skin, dyed red, green, blue, and yellow. The grass bottles and bowls are perfectly water-tight, and I have seen the latter placed near the embers of the fire to keep the food contained therein warm without doing the article any harm.

The embroidery work is done with floss silk, the work sometimes worked on a frame, sometimes in the hand, the garments ornamented being the ladies' trousers and over-dress. The former are ornamented round the ankles with a border for a width of from three to nine inches, with a design running up the inner side of the leg and then a round, oval, or square patch on the knees. The inner side is chosen as the ladies as a rule sit cross-legged, and their finery can be seen and admired. The over-dress is night-shirt shaped, with an opening in front of about six inches to pass the head through; round the neck and down the front there is a good deal of ornamentation, and the shoulders and elbows have also patches of work. The wrists of the dress are very tight and also embroidered; the centre of the back is also ornamented with a big patch, and very fine ladies have the lower part of the dress, for about six inches, also embroidered. The dress is fastened in front with silver buttons. Underclothing consists of a shirt, generally made out of Manchester cloth. The outer garment and trousers are of home-spun cotton, beautifully soft and better made, as a rule, than the shamma. The trousers are very tight at the ankles and look roomy higher up, and, to my eyes, out of proportion. The over-dress or smock fits tight over the

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shoulders and chest, and below is loose. The women wear slippers or sandals, silver anklets, and sometimes silver rings round the toes. Their fingers are covered with small silver rings, their wrists with bracelets and bangles, and they wear a necklace of silver, with a triangular or square locket attached —the usual blue silk strings sometimes wound round, with a slight silver chain, to which is tied a thick silver ring, crucifix, cross, or some picture of the Virgin or our Saviour, sometimes a charm to keep the wearer from evil or the evil eye. The earrings are generally very small and silver gilt or Sennaar gold. The hair of the married women is plaited in innumerable little plaits that run from the forehead to the back of the head, where they are collected together and tied, the ends forming a peculiar-looking bunch that hangs down for about two inches, each plait on the head being separated by a parting, which keeps it more cleanly. The head is generally ornamented by one or more silver-gilt pins, the heads of which are a little larger than a shilling and not badly made. The stem of the pin is bent. Equi-distant across the forehead three small silver-gilt stars are also worn, which are tied on by a small blue silk string. This is the outfit of a lady in the house. When she goes out she throws round her the common red and white national shamma, ties a piece of white cloth or a coloured pocket-handkerchief round her head, and with a European umbrella of some "loud" colour, or of every colour of the rainbow, she is ready for her promenade.

It is a pity that they have taken to the European umbrella, as the native ones are much prettier and keep the sun and rain off better than a European article. The only thing to be said against them is that they do not take down, and

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are therefore very clumsy, especially when a strong wind is blowing. When not wanted as a protection from the sun they are carried under the arm, with the open part of the umbrella against the back and the stick pointing forwards.

The unmarried ladies dress the same as the married ones, but shave the crown and backs of their heads; they do not have such a profusion of jewellery, nor is their dress so gaudy. Widows shave their heads as a token of mourning. A good many of the young married and unmarried girls wear their hair cut short, which gives them a boyish look, and for some types of countenance the cropped hair looks much nicer than the plaited, as if the latter is not fresh done it looks untidy and frowsy. Nearly all the ladies use a plentiful supply of grease and put scents of various sorts with it, musk, perhaps, being the most common.* During the hot weather and walking in the sun the fat or grease melts and drips, which neither improves their garments nor their personal appearance. Their clothes they generally wash with the seeds of a shrub; it makes a good lather. I don't know if it will do the same on the body and if it has skin-cleaning properties; if it has it might be in more general use, as the people are sadly wanting in cleanliness and they might well spare some of their fasting and godliness for a more decent appearance. The missionaries have done some good on the borders, as the people they have dealings with use less grease and have cleaner clothes, but I have remarked that it is only when they are in the immediate vicinity of the Mission Stations, and they soon relapse into their old custom of dirt. Old Bru occasionally washes and looks clean, and always pours water over his head after a hard night.

The men's dress consists of many sorts, according to

* An English perfumer would make a fortune in Abyssinia.

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whether they are rich or poor, or whether they have travelled, or have even made the trip down to Massowah. The ordinary rig is a tightish-fitting pair of knee-breeches, made of cotton, a shirt of Manchester goods, generally hanging over the breeches, a cummerbund round the waist, and the national shamma. Some only wear the knee-breeches and the shamma; others make an addition of a waistcoat.

The soldiers wear the knee-breeches, shirt, and shamma, a cartridge belt of leather round the waist, a sword belt, to which is attached the sickle-shaped sword or the straight-cutting sword, with whichever they are armed, and over the shoulder the round shield of bullock, or other thick hide, attached to which when not worn is a cape of goat or sheep skin. Round the head they wear, as a rule, a pocket-handkerchief or white cotton cloth. The better-to-do people often put on a loose coat or waistcoat, either of silk or satin, the shirt of good material, fastened in front and at the wrists with silver buttons. Some few who have travelled wear European-made trousers, either white or of some coloured washing material, and a coat buttoned up to the neck, but never hardly without the shamma. The labourers in the fields wear nothing but knee-breeches.

The merchants and shop-keepers' houses are always in compounds; generally they are in the centre, and here the goods for sale are kept. There is no show of the articles; they are only brought out on being asked for. Keeping an open shop would mean a temptation too great for the annexing mania of the people, and the stock in trade would soon get soiled, as the Abyssinians are great people for fingering articles which they do not intend to buy. What you see in the outer room, where the bargaining takes place, is no criterion of a man's wealth. The conversation which

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takes place generally leads up to finding out what is really required, and a purchaser may ask for many articles before he names that which he really wants. I daresay this style of business would nearly drive a European shopman mad, and I must say that it takes a long time to drive a bargain, though the value may be but a few dollars, while in England hundreds of thousands change hands in a short time. The profit on all European articles is enormous, and the commonest and most gimcrack things can be changed for the mighty dollar or bartered for valuable produce, such as ivory, musk, gold, and otter skins. Every merchant keeps a sort of general store, and I have seen but two or three who went in for specialities. The great imported staples in Adowa are cottons of all sorts from England and the Continent, cotton prints of many sorts, silks, satins, Birmingham sundries in the way of cutlery, beads, needles, and all sorts of little things, Bohemian glass ware, kerosine lamps, and African trade in general. Adowa still suffers from the disturbed times that the country has gone through, and from all accounts there is not one-twentieth of the trade of former days.

Should the country be opened up there would be a fine field for commerce to the mutual benefit of all who took part in it, as the riches of the country are entirely undeveloped, and with little trouble the inhabitants could find lots of things now growing wild that could be cultivated, and these could be interchanged for European goods. A good deal of the misery at home is not so much due to overproduction as it is to callousness and want of energy on the part of the Government in looking after the development of trade. I don't know what it is in other parts of the world, but I know what it is in the Red Sea with all

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the nearly virgin country at the back of it, which would be giving and taking produce in exchange, which would give employment to many men out of work. There are many classes that would benefit by it—the steamers, the dock labourers, the railways, the porters, the cartmen, the manufacturing classes, and the manufacturers. The merchants all get something, however, on what goes in and out of the country. A million taken out of trade means a livelihood to many. This is what has gone on in this part of the world, and I daresay another million or two of English commerce in the globe at this time is also short on account of the negligence and "don't care a fig for the merchant" policy of Mr. Gladstone and his slaves.

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CHAPTER XIV.

ABYSSINIAN INDUSTRIES.

Let us enter another house, that of the King's jeweller, and see what he is doing. I used to go and see "Mr." Negradas Mared very often and have a glass of his good tedj with him. He was a curious, crotchety old boy, with a pretty daughter, whom I used to chaff, as she talked a little Arabic which she had picked up from the working jewellers employed by her father. The old gentleman had made jewellery for lots of Kings and Abyssinian potentates, and was a fund of information. He was of opinion that King John was the best King he had seen, and the most generous, *i.e.*, I suppose he got more work out of him than any other, and was doubtless pleased that his men below at work had so much to do. The room in which I used to be received was upstairs, a centre room with two others on each side, all of which communicated with each other and all opened out to a roof, to which the staircase led. One room was used by the females, of which there were many—mother, aunts, sisters, and cousins. Old "Mrs." Mared was very old, very ugly, and very dirty, but great fun, and was very fond of showing her household treasures, of which she had a

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good supply, and some very decent-made stools, bedsteads, and a cupboard with some old carving on it, which was curious and well done. Her saints and crucifixes were numerous, and some of the representations of our Saviour grotesque in the extreme. Her room, where the domestic work went on, was not badly furnished; the sitting and reception rooms were decently clean, with some good old Persian carpets.

The other room was the sleeping room. The reception-room which "Mr." Negradas Mared used to use and keep all his made jewellery in was fitted with a divan along one side, and in the middle of the wall along which the divan was placed was a window looking down into the room where the jewellers worked, so that he could keep an eye on them. The room had a few boxes round it, and the floor was covered with fresh rushes and tanned ox hides. The stock of jewellery was not large, consisting of mostly odds and ends. As a rule, jewellers in this country, as in all the coast towns, keep very few goods on hand, and make to order only. It is with great difficulty that good specimens of the native work can be purchased. Outside the churches on the high days and holidays is the best place for purchasing a good collection, and then when a pretty ornament is seen on the person of a young woman simply to accost her and ask her if she is willing to part with it; if so, it necessitates a visit to her house, and then a long bargain, in which the members of the family have to be consulted; but very often some stubborn member will not part, and the bother is in vain. It is a curious way of getting specimens, and would not do in a civilized country.

The only really interesting art that the Abyssinians have, and which has nearly died out, there being only one work-

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man in Adowa able to do it, and some few at Gondar and the other big towns, is inlaying gold on iron. The merchants at Adowa before I left made me a present of a specimen, viz., the cross of the Holy Trinity. The cross was of iron, the three heads and the ornamentation of the cross being of gold. I gave it to Admiral Hewett. It was given me by the merchants for helping them on many occasions at Massowah. The man who did this work was a half-breed—father Abyssinian, mother Shangalla—and he had learnt the art at Gondar. He was by far the best craftsman that Negradas Mared employed, and was at work on the orders of Solomon that the King was to present to the mission.

The tools employed by the gold and silversmiths are of the roughest, and consist of very bad shaped hammers, pincers, anvil, blow-pipe, and bellows, and it is astonishing what delicate work they turn out with such rude means. The embossing tools and engraving pencils are also very rough. Earrings, stars, hair-pins, necklaces, bracelets, the ornaments for the shields, sword handles, and head-stalls for mules and horses are made of filigree; lockets, bosses for shields, harness and saddle ornaments are made of beaten work also; the ground work of the bracelets is made of hammered and beaten gold and silver; anklets, toe and finger rings of solid gold or silver are also made of hammered metal. The Abyssinians know nothing of the lapidary's art, and use very few precious stones. These are generally agates and crystals of different colours. Negradas Mared had a few specimens of everything I have enumerated, some good and some very poor. He said before the war with the Egyptians that the people were much richer, and had a good deal of jewellery, and now confidence was being restored that the farmer class were again having jewellery

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made, and, if the roads were opened for trade, the people would soon get prosperous again, and invest their savings in ornaments, &c. The chain work in Abyssinia is very well done, and they have really an interesting lot of specimens, one or two of which I have not seen in England. They can also copy any pattern given them, and I lent them my gold chain to copy, as it took the fancy of one of the jewellers, and he wanted to make a long chain for the head-stall of a mule. These chains are of a great length, and go from under the chin strap, round the animal's neck, then form a sort of breast-plate, and are fastened on the girth under the saddle.

The leather workers are also interesting to watch. Besides working in leather they also combine work in furs—lion, leopard, otter, and monkey skins being the chief pelts used. The capes they turn out for presentation dresses and for the dresses of the principal commanding officers of the King's army, after leaving their hands go to the silk workers, who do the linings and borders of either silk or satin, and fit the buckles and clasps of silver or gold. The chief articles worked in leather are shields, scabbards, saddles, harness, belts, and other small sundries. The shields are made of the hides of any thick-skinned wild animals, and ox skins, and sometimes of layers of smaller tough skins. They are always of a round shape, and are well finished. The best and swell ones are always covered with gold, silver, or silver-gilt ornaments in embossed and filigree work; the groundwork of the shield is sometimes covered with velvet, or a dyed skin, generally of kid or lamb. These skins are stamped with patterns and designs. The interior of the shield is covered with a red or scarlet dyed skin. Those that are not ornamented with metal have

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mostly an outer covering of a worked or stamped skin, with a regular pattern of a very creditable design. There is always a raised centre to the shields, which are never flat, but rather saucer-shaped, with the rim turned up and rounded off. They take a long time to make, and press, and get firm. The saddles are made of wood, with very high pommels in front and behind, the front pommel leaning slightly forward, while the back one is nearly straight. The saddles are kept together with raw hide neatly bound, and then the whole covered with sheep or goat skin; the outer covering put on over the rough skin is of thinner material, and dyed red or green.

The headstalls, bridles, cruppers, &c., are made of several layers of thin skins sewn together, and are rough and bad, and being made in so many pieces the uneven edges have a tendency to chafe the animal, a drawback which Abyssinians do not seem to mind, as they saddle the most shocking raw-backed animals, and the poor brutes one would think must be in agony; but it is astonishing what the riding animals in this country can stand. The saddle cloth, without which no Abyssinian saddle is complete, is generally a most wonderful article; it fits over the pommels, and two holes to let the pommels through keep it in place; the cloth hangs down to past the stirrup, and a hole on each side lets the stirrup through. The ends of the cloth have a V reversed cut out on each side. The saddle cloths are of thin leather lined with cotton, and are ornamented with all sorts of designs: fights between animals, men on horseback attacking lions and elephants, St. George and the Dragon, and other pictures. Tinsel forms part of the ornament; the cloths are very gaudy. They are in very bad taste, and most circus looking. Belts, and all straps that with

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us are made of a single piece of leather, are here made in layers.

I don't know whether it is from being unable to tan thick skins soft, but expect it is for this reason, the pelts of the Abyssinian cattle are very light, and the brown tanned bullock and ox hides after being finished are quite soft and thin, and the sheep and goat skins something like brown paper in thickness. The skins are treated to a course of baths in which the bark of a tree is used; after a few days' immersion the hair falls off, leaving the outer side quite bare and of a rich brown colour; the inner side of the skin is then hand rubbed, and dried in the sun. The hides of commerce are just taken off the animals, dried in the sun, then folded in squares of about fifteen inches, and are ready to be taken to the coast, where they are thrown into the sea for a day or two, taken out, rubbed with salt, dried in the sun, then folded down the spine and are ready for shipment to Europe.

Bags of all sizes, sword scabbards, bandoliers, cartridge belts and pouches, sandals are also made by the leather-workers, who work well and turn out very creditable work, and I daresay if encouraged, like our workmen are at home, they could improve greatly. There is no lack of skill in the country, and with trades fostered and labour cheap they might make many fancy articles for export. The country has been a dead one as far as European commerce is concerned, and the Egyptian Government has always taken good care since our expedition in 1868 to keep it entirely locked from the outer world. And much good their policy has done them.

Nearly everything in the shape of household wants is furnished by the households themselves. There are no

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manufactories in the country, no particular trades. The spinning for the ordinary clothes worn is done at home. Every householder is his own baker, butcher, tailor, brewer. They all do a little carpentering and building, and trades are nearly unknown. The carpenters keep no shops or ready-made goods. All change and interchange of produce is done in the markets, which are the great meeting places. There petty pedlars come and travel about the country with their packs and stock-in-trade consisting of pins and needles, cotton, and Birmingham goods. The cloth merchants have their houses but no shops. Their trade is what might be called a private one as their houses are enclosed with high walls and are not to be distinguished from private dwellings.

The only person whose trade can be distinguished is the blacksmith, and that because of the noise he makes with his hammering. His business is, however, different from that of his brother tradesman in England. He has no horses to shoe, as the animals in this country do not wear shoes; no carts to repair, as none are used, and he has no big work to do, and his anvil and bellows are insignificant compared with those of an ordinary village blacksmith. The anvil is small and portable; the bellows generally a good large sheep skin with the neck prolonged into a wooden or iron pipe, the mouth of the bellows is made of two sticks fastened on to the skin, and wind is got by bringing the two sticks together smartly with a clack and a rotatory motion given to the skin with the other hand. I could get no wind out of the instrument, and it is only an African that could. I can fancy an English blacksmith trying his hand at it, and calling it all the names he could lay his tongue to, and telling his friend the village milk-maid of the wonders of the African blacksmith, and she retorting

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and telling the blacksmith of the wonderful ways that the African milk-maids have of procuring milk when the cows don't seem to be inclined to part with their produce.

I cannot describe the native armourer and gunsmith as, for a very good reason, not one exists now in the place, they having all been worked out of the field by a worthy Frenchman, and if you are to believe all he says, the way all his opponents committed suicide, went mad, &c., must have been something frightful. There is no doubt that he has the monopoly of the gun-mending work in Adowa and the north part of the country. He had a most unpronounceable name, and his Christian name was Jean. As he was a monopolist let's call him J. C., or Joe Chamberlain. J. C. was very short and very fat, and very good-humoured; he liked nothing better than to have a long chat with a visitor, and, of course, a European—and an Englishman was a treat to get hold of—to tell that it is not only the Anglais that can get on and colonize, but also the representative of *la belle* France. J. C. had been in the country fourteen years, and had only been home once, when he went away with sundry bags of dollars to his home near Marseilles to give a portion to his son and daughter, who were both going to be married.

The old gentleman received you on the top of his house, and his building was one of the most extraordinary ones I ever saw. On entering from the street the door opened inwards on to the side of a hill. The property might have been twenty yards wide and about one hundred yards deep, and was all "slantingdicular;" the walls were not straight, the house was not straight, and everything was as crooked as native architecture could make it. The entrance door was just high enough to allow of a mule going through,

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and I had to stoop to get through. On entering I found myself alongside a staircase. About half a dozen steps up took one on to the roof of the buildings in the court-yard, and a few more steps brought me into a long low single room, which was the sleeping and dwelling place of our host. The room was badly lighted by small windows, totally inadequate for ventilation purposes, and had it not been for the door, light and air would have been scarce. It was full of all sorts of odds and ends and curios, and the samples of guns and rifles were most amusing, there being specimens of guns hundreds of years old up to those of quite modern pattern. Here a gun that wanted a new lock, there one that wanted a new stock, others hammerless, sightless, barrels burst, barrels bent, barrels bulged—a regular hospital for sick fire-arms—and the doctor, touching himself with pride, saying, "These are only some of my patients, and I shall mend them all."

I was much interested with some Remington rifles and carbines of which he had seven or eight with their stocks broken off at the grip. These had just come into the country and had been sent him for repair; they had evidently come all the way from Tokar and must have been broken at either Baker's or Graham's battle at El Teb. If at the latter they had arrived in Abyssinia remarkably quickly, and were a proof that some of the frontier tribes had been present at these engagements or on the spot soon afterwards, and that those who had picked them up knew where to find a market for them. There was no mistaking where they had come from, as they showed signs of comparatively recent firing, and one or two were marked with blood.

The old flint locks were most curious, some of them

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were of Portuguese manufacture—one with a bell mouth was well inlaid and carved, and had evidently been brought over by the Portuguese when they invaded the country in the fifteenth century. There were Bedouin guns, German, Belgium, French, Italian, Birmingham, and guns of every nationality. Pistols of all sorts, and revolvers of Belgium manufacture.

I told the representative of France that my gun had met with an accident, and he insisted that I should send to camp for it that he might see how long it would take him to repair, and before our conversation was over Mahomed had brought it, and I was told it would be ready next day. We had some tedj presented to us, and I drank mine out of a very handsome Dresden bowl, which our host was very proud of. It had belonged to Ouvieh, a King of Abyssinia, and had come into his possession in part payment of a bill for repairs of guns belonging to one of Ouvieh's old servants. The bowl was a present the King had received from one of the numerous European missions that had visited Abyssinia.

J. C. was called away on two occasions by clamorous soldiers, asking if their arms were repaired, and during our stay he received several dollars, a proof that he was paid for his work, and that what he said about the number of dollars he could make was not a pure invention. His workshop below, in the yard, was also full of cripples, and he had at least two or three months' hard work on hand for himself and two native assistants. There is no doubt that a working gunsmith could find plenty of employment in the country, and if protected by Ras Aloula and the King could make a very good living and put by money. Our host informed us that the Abyssinians greatly preferred breech-loaders to the old sorts of guns, and the only difficulty

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was with cartridges, which were very scarce and dear. The powder used in the country was of home manufacture and of slow combustion, very likely more suited to the old muzzle-loaders, which, in their old and bad state, could not stand good English powder. A most welcome present to any Abyssinian was a tin of English powder, which they invariably mixed with their own, and they then did not require so much to charge their pieces with.

I should have been very sorry to be behind some of the firearms in his shop, but it is extraordinary what few accidents take place considering the class of weapons used. The breech-loaders and better class of guns nearly all belong to the soldiers, though some of the merchants who trade with Massowah and the Galla country are also well armed. The old ramshackle guns generally belong to the peasants, who use them for driving off the animals that feed on their crops.

The bullets used in some of the weapons are made of hammered iron generally, and are a great deal too small for the barrels, and they are covered with soft cotton rags to make them fit. When iron cannot be procured stones are used, and I saw some very good specimens of stone bullets. Lead is, of course, used when procurable; but it is contraband at Massowah and the Egyptians do not allow its importation. They are so strict that even the leads on the casting nets sold to the Abyssinians at Massowah are forbidden. What lead reaches the country comes through Massowah contraband, and most likely forms a good part of the extra income of the officials at that port. There never was an Oriental Custom House in which smuggling did not go on, and if I ever changed my faith to that of the followers of the prophet I should like to enter the Custom House branch of the service, as being the

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most remunerative. Eley's caps and those of German make are also contraband, and are used a good deal in the country. Flint locks do not seem to be so much used as those with slow match, the latter being more sure of igniting the powder in damp weather and easier kept dry; the place generally used to carry and keep the slow match dry is under the arm-pit, and the slow match is easily lighted with a flint and steel before the shot is taken, which is always done out of hearing of the animal, a miss-fire with the flint lock being quite enough to draw the attention of the animal and frighten it away.

The house we were in was not a bit better furnished than the ordinary Abyssinian dwelling, and consisted of the usual divan and native bedstead, or angareb, with sundry boxes about the floor. There were shelves in this house and very few cow-horn pegs, two work-tables, with rough vices to hold the work, and a carpenter's bench being the only extras. The house was a trifle more cleanly and no animal *débris* lying about, but "slow lou" and "spring lou"* had their homes in the furniture and floor.

The view out of the door of the room was not ugly: there was a shady tree in the next compound that took away a great deal of the glare of the roofs and surrounding walls, and in the rainy season I daresay the view was much prettier; the background was filled in with the high hill on the north of the town, about two miles off, a glimpse of the church of St. Michael in its setting of trees, a green grass patch or two marking the places where the innumerable springs in the valley are situated, round which grass grows all the year round, sets off the universal brown of the fallow fields. A glimpse or

* Louse. Pigin, English lou; slow lou, bug; spring lou, flea.

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two of the running water in the little Assam River, with its big rocky boulders, was visible over the roofs and between the buildings of the town. The walls and roofs were covered with all sorts of small vegetation, and in wet weather the growing plants must have given a garden-like appearance to the now dried-up flat tops to the houses and turned the walls into ferneries.

In the spaces between the stones I could distinguish several specimens of ferns, among which the maidenhair, stone crop, and other familiar wall parasites were not uncommon. Flower stems and seed pods in a dried state did not allow of my finding out what sort of flowers adorned the roofs, but I was informed by the old Frenchman that there was a perfectly natural garden on each house immediately after the rains began.

My gun was repaired, and the makeshift enabled me to use it in a more comfortable manner than since the accident; but the job was of the roughest description, the fore-end being made out of hard wood, fastened to the barrel by an iron pin through the catch, which luckily had a hole through it, and was not like an ordinary one with a common slot. I expressed my thanks, and on asking for my bill I was told it was too great an honour to help a European in difficulties, and that it would offend if money was offered. Before leaving the crying of a very small child was heard, which was not noticeable on our former visits, and our host volunteered the statement that his wife had just had a baby, that she was not presentable, but that we might see the baby. The old man seemed very proud of his offspring, which was brought in by an Abyssinian lady of a certain age. It was a very small child, of a whitey-brown colour, with pink points. The male parent was

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delighted and hoped it would be like him and not like its mother, and said he would send her to France to be educated. If the young lady grows up like her father I don't think she will be a great beauty and turn the heads of the gallant sons of France. It may be very nice to have small children in one's old age, and for one who travels much and lives with natives, relations at home might think it a mighty bore to have sundry specimens of native crosses brought home for them to look at and look after.

The best church in the town is that of the Holy Trinity situated on a hill in the centre of the town. It is a conspicuous landmark and can be seen for many miles, especially from the Axum, or western side of the town. It is circular, with an enormous thatched roof of good workmanship. The top of the dome, if it may be called one, is of sheet brass, which shines in the sun and looks very pretty at sunrise and sunset. The cross on the top is of a perfect Abyssinian pattern. It is not unlike a Maltese cross, but between the right angular part it is filled in with filigree work, which gives a lightness to the construction. The crosses are much prettier than anything of Protestant or Roman Catholic manufacture in our country, and might well be copied.

The church is surrounded by a circular verandah, about fourteen feet wide; a flight of three steps leads up to it. The walls of the church are made of stone, plastered with a brown mortar. The windows are about three feet from the veranda floor, and about ten feet high; they are guileless of glass, and are merely wooden lattice work of rather creditable workmanship. The doors are of comparative rough work, and are double ones; hinges, locks, ornaments, and bolts for closing them are made of ironwork. They are four in

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number, and face north, south, east, and west. Inside these doors there is circular passage running round the whole church. The walls are decorated all over with paintings, representing biblical, mythical, and local history. I really could not stay long in the gallery, which may be called the National Gallery of the country, as I was afraid of hurting the feelings of the priests. I longed to be allowed to visit it alone, and improve some of the paintings, and Villiers, who was with me, could hardly restrain his merriment.

No wonder the priests of the country don't like European Christians, who cannot help laughing at what they consider works of art and most serious subjects, but what are really the most childish daubs and ridiculous caricatures. There is no life in any of the drawings; the old Egyptian paintings and carvings are works of art compared to the productions of Abyssinian artists. The Deity is most curious, so are the representations of our Saviour and the Virgin Mary; the Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, St. George and the Dragon, Turks, and Egyptians are all the same in the face. A cow looks very much like a horse, or a sheep, or a goat, or a mule, and are only to be recognized by their tails and size.

The two battle scenes of the fights of Gura and Gundet are really most amusing. There is hardly a single dead Abyssinian; all the Egyptians are supposed to be running away, but as they are all facing the person looking at the picture, and all the pursuing Abyssinians and their horses are doing the same and all the chopped off heads, the artistic result is ludicrous, and the only true part of the drawing is the portion representing the Egyptians firing their guns, for they never do look down their barrels at the

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sights. The artillery firing their cannons is also a work of art—flames proceed from touch-hole and muzzle; the shells are like turnips, with red tops instead of green; no smoke is given. The dead Egyptians are laid out like sardines, their heads all one way, and, of course, no expression of pain is given to the unfortunates who have been run through with spears.

The devil is painted as black as possible, but with fine white eyeballs and a splendid tail. Some portraits of him must be life-like; in one he is represented running away with a very fine girl, but who she is or what the picture is intended to represent I don't know. Jonah and the whale is something new, and there is really something to learn in the different paintings, which take in all the chief Bible incidents. No neutral colours are used; red, green, blue, and yellow are the chief colours, and as they are all on a ground of white the decoration may be imagined as effective. I was really so dazed and taken up with the pictures that I did not take much note of anything else inside the church.

The inner compound in which the church is situated has a few good trees, but it is very badly kept, and full of rough grass. The two belfries are curious old buildings, and much older than the church, which has been rebuilt and redecorated. It is rethatched nearly every year. The thatch is full of pigeons' nests, and crows, hawks, and owls build in the outbuildings. The roads up to the church are most peculiar, and two of them are in steps, very much like the road up the rock at Gibraltar. The outside compound is enclosed by a much lower wall than the inner one; the latter has no regular doors, the entrance is up three steps through a hole in the wall, and have evidently been built

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so that animals cannot enter the inner enclosure, and that no one can ride up to the doors of the church, not even the King, to show the people that even he has to acknowledge the power of the priests.

Of all the churches the quietest, most secluded, and the oldest is that of Our Saviour, which is at the top of a low hill between the Church of the Trinity and the market green. The church is surrounded by high walls, and the compound is full of old shady trees. The church is built in the same way as the one before described, but is much smaller, and the paintings are quieter and in better taste, but hardly more artistic. The Church of St. George is on a hill to the east of the town, and on a higher part of the same ridge is the King's dwelling-place when he visits Adowa. There is a rather large monastery attached to this church, and it is the quietest one of the five, and from it the best view of Adowa is obtainable. The Church of St. Michael is on the Adi-Aboona side of the Assam River, and is nicely encircled with trees; about half-a-mile from this is the dwelling-place of the Itchage, or Chief Priest of Abyssinia, who ranks next to the Aboona. The Itchage is always a true Abyssinian. He follows the King about a good deal, and has a great deal of power in the country.

The Aboona seldom or ever leaves his domicile, and is hardly ever seen. He is a Copt, and is chosen from the Coptic Monastery at Alexandria. Why he comes from there, and as a stranger to the country cannot know much about the inhabitants or their wants, is another of these church mysteries. There used to be in former times a Mahomedan mosque in Adowa, but it was destroyed when the Moslems were attacking Abyssinia in 1875, when all those Moslems that would not turn Christian had to leave

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the country. Many of the Moslems, the majority of them at least, changed their faith, showing what a very little hold their religion had on them, and it is a known fact that all the frontier hill-men in this part of the world think a great deal more about their stomachs than their faith, and that the Mahdi's tenets have no hold on them. They would follow any faith that paid them best. Mahomedanism has never been able to make converts over 4,000 feet above the sea. Considering the country has been the nearest Christian one to Mecca, it says a good deal for them, as a dark race, that they have never adopted the common faith of the surrounding tribes, and that they have held out so well against the followers of the Prophet when other countries, and even Europe, could not stem the tide of the Moslem conquest. What few Mahomedans there are in this part of the world wear the blue silk cord with silver ring attached like all the Christians, and only draw the line at the crucifix, which is not worn by all Abyssinians.

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CHAPTER XV.

ADOWA.

THE market green on market day is a busy place. The peasants from the country side all flock in to sell their produce, and bartering goes on from soon after daylight and is kept up till late in the afternoon. There is some kind of order kept, and the people put down their goods on the grass. Perishable goods are generally placed on rough mats. The green for about half its space is covered by long lines of sellers, and enough space is left between the lines for locomotion, and that is all. One person has a miscellaneous lot of goods—say a few chicken, a little ghee or clarified butter, a native shamma or two, and two or three baskets or bags of red chillies in an undried state; another has a sheep or two, some honey, and a bag or basket or two of dried pepper; others have bars of salt for sale, which is also used as a means of change, as small monies are very rare, the Maria Theresa dollar of A.D. 1780 being the standard and only coin. Exchange varies, as it does in all countries; sometimes thirty bars of salt go to a dollar, sometimes as many as 120. The bars of salt are about six inches long by about an inch and a half square, and are generally tied together or bound round by rushes. The salt

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comes from the Danakil country, situated in the plains between the highlands of Abyssinia and the sea. The chief place where it is found is Hanfilah plain, above the ports of Eidd and Hanfilah. The salt is of a brownish colour, very hard, and stands the damp very well; if it did not do so many a person's small fortune would be turned into water during the rainy season. There is no legend in Abyssinia of the devil turning money into something else, as there is in Egypt; he was rude enough to turn the money belonging to the good people there, so the tale goes, into small shells, which are found to this day near the Pyramids, and the country seems to be still suffering from other devils, wasting the money of its inhabitants by building palaces, which, however, will not last as long as the fossil shells.

Everything that the country produces can be found in Adowa on the market day—wheat, barley, oats, grain, maize, dhurra, millet, linseed, beans, peas, lentils, and every sort of grain, red peppers of all descriptions, the seeds of the soap bush, honey, beeswax, drugs, kussoo, the great remedy for tapeworm, fruits of several sorts, wooden bowls, basket work, swords, spears, shields, knives, and arms of all sorts, leather work, native-worked cloth and embroidery.

Live stock of all sorts is, of course, plentiful, and the most amusing part of the market, perhaps, is the horse and mule department. The former are all native bred, and are a hardy, useful class of animals; they are no great beauties to look at, and are always in a very rough state, being badly groomed, but they rapidly improve with a little care. They are, as a rule, very small, and there is hardly an animal in the country that is fifteen hands. Their shape is more like the Dongola horse than the Arab, but they are not as big as the former, and, therefore, do not look so ungainly, and have

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not the big head and ewe neck which the Dongola horse so often has. The horses are of all colours, duns and what may be called circus colours, perhaps, being very common; blacks are rare, and white or grey horses not so common as in other countries. The Abyssinian horse is a lightish-boned animal, with good shoulders, falling off rather behind the saddle, legs generally good and clean, hoofs very strong and flat, and it is really marvellous what sure-footed beasts they are, and where they will climb with a light weight on their back.

An Abyssinian seldom or ever thinks of dismounting while going up and down the steep hills, and a chipped or broken knee is not so common as one would think, seeing where and what the animals have to travel over. The poor beasts, as a rule, have bad mouths, which is not to be wondered at considering the style of bit used, which is of the ordinary Arab pattern. With a common English snaffle, after a short time a horse can easily be ridden, as they very soon lose the habit of pulling, and are very free from vice. They make first-rate shooting ponies, and are never gun-shy; and I should think would, with light weights on their backs, make first-rate animals for mounted infantry. The Abyssinians are great men for showing off on horseback, and have the very cruel trick—practised, as far as my experience goes, by all natives—of sending an animal along at full speed for about 100 yards, and then trying to break the beast's jaw by pulling him up suddenly. The bits used, with no exaggeration, throw the animal instantaneously on his haunches, and very often immediately afterwards blood can be seen coming from the animal's mouth. I never could understand what use this trick was as a cavalry manœuvre. It must be useless, as the rider is nearly un-

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horsed, and with lance or sword in hand there could be no certainty of aim or blow. The horses were all shown off in this way, one or two riders accomplishing the feat bare backed. The ordinary riders had hard work to stick to their high-pommelled saddles, and the big toe inserted in the iron ring, which does service for a stirrup in this country, must have had a good pressure on it as well. The horses are nearly all geldings, mares and stallions being seldom seen in the market. The horses are always used for riding and pack purposes; I have never seen one used for ploughing or agricultural work.

The mules of the country are also small but hardy, and for their size carry good weights, some of them up to 200lbs. They often suffer greatly from sore backs, which are hideous to look at, the wounds being often over a foot long. There is no doubt that the sore backs are caused by the chafes during the damp season, when an animal may be wet from early morning till near mid-day. He then has his saddle taken off, and left in the sun to dry; the back and hair get hard from exposure, a damp saddle is again put on, the animal marches till near sunset, when the pack is again taken off, and the animal turned out to graze. The night is perhaps cold and damp, and the chafe still unattended to, and a couple of days is then enough to start a sore, which, with no attention, becomes permanent and the animal ruined. The mules, as a rule, are light-boned, small, compact, and good-looking. They appear more suited for riding than for pack purposes; they are very game beasts, and do long distances with their loads, and no place seems too steep for them to climb. With care, good saddles, and proper feeding they do their work wonderfully well, and get over long marches, and are always fit and ready for a

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start in the morning. They seem of a more cheerful temperament than the large Spanish beasts, and they do not deserve the character generally given to this animal, as they are far from stubborn. The majority of the mules come from the southern and central portions of the country; very few are bred in the north, where is a paucity of horses, mules, and asses.

North of the Mareb the beast of burthen is the ox, which has a mean time of it all round. He carries the produce to market, ploughs the fields, and often enough, after carrying a bundle or two of hides of his brother animals all the way from Adowa to Massowah, is sold to the butcher, and is killed for eating. Abyssinian beef at Massowah is not good, and the meat from the back of an old pack animal is far from being tender. The price of a horse rarely exceeds 100 dollars, and for that figure a very good animal can be bought. The ordinary prices for common animals run from twenty to forty dollars. Mules are a little more expensive, but a good animal can be got for fifty dollars. Pack bullocks run up to thirty dollars; bullocks for eating to ten dollars; sheep from a quarter dollar to a dollar and a half; goats about the same. Gelded goats get very fat and of a large size, and sell at three or four dollars.

What strikes those who have been brought up in the country part of England, and know something about stock, is what good animals, both in cattle and sheep, could be turned out of this country in nearly unlimited quantities, and at a low rate. No Abyssinian has any capital, nor is it safe altogether for him to be known as a rich man; therefore he cannot lay out money for improving his herds by keeping provender for them during the dry months. Although there is unlimited grazing country, little or no

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hay is made; the stalks of the dhurra and Indian corn make good food, but still it is not collected and kept for what we should call winter food. In consequence, during the three to four months of dry weather, the cattle have to follow the grass to the low country, or pick up a precarious living nearly akin to starvation. Few people can send their cattle down country, and others who would be cattle owners do not like the risk of keeping their cattle through the dry season.

It takes an animal a good three months to get over the effects of the dry season, and on commencement of the wet season there is nearly always a lot of cattle disease about, and it picks off the weaker ones. The time, therefore, for an animal to grow and get fat is reduced to about four months. What with in and in breeding, a regular stated time for starvation during the year, animals do not thrive as they should, and the majority of them are miserable. Still, one sees good framed animals and the making of beef, backs broad and straight, good ribs and thighs, and low on the leg. The animals are not, as a rule, very large, being about the size of a good Alderney; some, however, are a good deal larger. I should like to try the experiment of a little cattle fattening, and see how they would do on cake, &c., as the Hamasen plain is in easy distance of the coast, and there is a good market for cattle at Aden and Suez. For cheapness the Somali country is the only place that can compete, and the cattle from there do not stand travelling. The sheep of the country are very small, but when in good condition the mutton is sweet and tender. A good depôt from Hamasen half way to the coast would be the Ginda plateau; from there to Massowah would be two night marches of about 16 miles each, with water on the way.

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Kirkham, who went to Abyssinia after the 1868 expedition, and drilled King John's troops, and rose to the rank of General, had a good tract of country given to him by King John. It lay to the left of the road from Asmara to Addetchlai. He did very well at farming, and his servants and those immediately around him were never in want of grain and cattle. The village he built and the improvements he made were all swept away in 1877 by Walad-el-Michael in his raids on the Hamasen. Poor Kirkham fell a victim to dysentery and the brandy-bottle when a prisoner of the Egyptians in Massowah. He was denied a doctor, and granted unlimited brandy; the latter finished the work Nature had begun. It requires a strong constitution to stand the effects of Egyptian imprisonment. Kirkham died in the arms of my old friend the Swedish missionary Petersen, and was buried at Mocoullon just outside Massowah. Poor Petersen also died in the country. He was a great deal too fragile for the work, and although bodily weak, his energy and go was extraordinary. He was a really good man, and a great favourite with everybody, civilized and uncivilized.

The walks round Adowa are very pretty, and the shooting, considering how the game is disturbed, not bad. I used to go out two or three times a week, sometimes for the whole day long, leaving camp before daylight, and taking a pack-mule to carry lunch and breakfast. I was generally accompanied by one or two of the mission, and I always used to look forward to a good day's outing as a pleasant change from the monotony of camp life and its little bickerings. The prettiest walk is eastwards from camp to the sources of the Assam River, which rises among the curious mountain peaks situated about seven miles east of the town. The

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road runs past the foot of Gebel Sassa, the conspicuous nearest peak to Adowa, and which hides the view of Adi Aboona from our camp. After crossing a small hill the road runs through a group of water meadows, which are said to be full of snipe in winter time, and then into cultivated ground. This is surrounded by a circle of hills, the Assam River running through a narrow gorge. The banks of the river are well wooded with acacias of all sorts (perfect giants) and wild date trees.

Just in the narrow gorge are a great many water meadows, and the banks of the river and the meadows merge, the lowest part of them being full of water-cress, water-lilies, marsh marigolds, a species of gigantic dock-plant, and many other water plants, not forgetting our old friend the "forget-me-not," which grows in great abundance, and to a large size. Immediately after leaving these water meadows the river-bed opens out into pools and ponds, the marshy bed being about 300 yards across, in which are some rush-covered islands, the breeding place of geese, ducks, grebes, and other water birds. The marsh is fed by ditches or brooks which run in the centre of the three valleys forming the easternmost part of the Assam watershed. It is surrounded by cultivated ground, and now there are large patches of chillies growing, both of the large and small description. There are also tomatoes, onions, and a little grain. The fields are being ploughed up and getting ready for sowing.

In a fine old grass field full of thistles, in which a lot of pretty cattle and some donkeys were grazing, were three hares, all of which my companion and I missed; and then we sat down under a nice shady mimosa and watched the cultivation going on. A friendly Abyssinian with his two children came up and offered us some fresh milk, which we accepted

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with pleasure, and he smoked the forbidden cigarette with us. His pretty little daughter sat down beside me and munched the biscuit I gave her. "What news; are you happy?" The answer, "Yes, if we could only trade; our merchants are robbed by the Moslems." "How do you like the King?" "He is the best King we ever had, and we are pleased to see the English come and visit him." "How do you like Ras Aloula?" "He is a just man, and everyone is pleased with him. Our Governor in Adowa is not a good man. Is it true that the English have killed many dervishes?" I told him about our fights, which he hardly believed, and when I had told him all, he said, "Thank God and the Virgin Mary that you have won the day. We heard the English had been beaten, and had come to ask King John to help them. The Moslems are liars; now we do not fear the dervishes; let them come, we shall kill them as well."

I always found the cultivators of the country quiet and kind people, perfectly aware that they had everything to gain by peace and everything to lose by war, and apart from their dirtiness and low sort of godliness, they are not bad people. They are evidently capable of following new ideas and improving their position; they are very fond of good food, good clothes, jewellery, and the flesh-pots of this world, and would always like peace and plenty; they are truculent, and know how to fight and defend their property, which makes Abyssinia such a hard nut to crack for the Moslems. Once properly armed with rifles which they would soon learn to use, they would be a difficult nation to conquer. Luckily for the Soudan they will not learn drill, and fight individually, or the whole lowlands would be at their mercy.

After lunch we wended our way back by a short cut over the hills, and got to camp.

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The shooting down the Assam River to the west is good. There are hares, duck and geese, and a few francolin. The river opens out into long pools, some of which when deep are very sluggish, and the banks are studded with long water grass and reeds with an occasional tree or two hanging over the water, on which there was generally a pair, sometimes more, of kingfishers, the bird being nearly identical with ours at home. The black and white kingfisher of Egypt, India, and Ceylon is also common. The shyest birds are the pretty little grebes and dabchicks, and as soon as one comes in sight of a pool they all vanish by sitting down and keeping quiet; first one appears and gives a call, then another, and they are soon all out of their hiding-places swimming and diving about. They are the most amusing little birds, especially the young ones, tiny little mites of down. They live the whole year round in the Assam, and have a good time of it, as no one kills them or takes their eggs. They generally are found in the big deep pools.

The Assam River, as soon as it leaves Adowa, is joined by several small brooks and streams, and gets gradually larger the farther it goes, till it reaches a rocky gorge about eleven miles from Adowa. This gorge is about five miles long, in which are several small waterfalls, and the whole stream is more of a torrent, with only two fordable places. After passing the southern range of hills seen from Adowa it is increased by their drainage and then runs through nearly open country till it joins the Tacazze. The shooting along its banks is very pretty, and when the snipe are about I don't know where nicer shooting could be found, as besides the snipe and various sorts of duck that come in the season there are quail, partridge, francolin, guinea-fowl, geese, hares, two

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sorts of gazelle, and the otter, whose skin is very valuable. The collector of birds and insects could find no better spot.

Leaving camp just after daylight with four servants and a couple of companions, with a well-stocked pair of hampers on a pack mule, we rode towards Adowa, one gun turning off before reaching the town to drive the fields and the two or three pools near the town and to join us about five miles the other side of Adowa, to get any geese and ducks that may fly back to the pools which we have once gone over. Through Adowa, the morning being chilly, few people are moving; those that are have their shammas muffled up about their heads and don't look particularly cheerful. The town does not look inviting, and there is a smell of smoke from damp wood.

The other side of Adowa and the ploughed fields are reached just as the sun is rising and Adowa looks at its best. The sun gilds the gilt top to the Church of the Holy Trinity, and throws lovely tints on the mountain peaks in the background. The smoke, that was such a nuisance in riding through the town, is rising with the sun rays and looks a misty blue. It would make a glorious picture. In the fields an occasional jackal or two are returning to their homes after a night's prowl round the town. Hyenas, curiously enough, are not seen, as they go to bed earlier, and all the time I have been in the Soudan and Abyssinia I have only seen two hyenas in broad daylight, and those, curiously enough, on the same day. During the short twilight, and on moonlight nights, I have seen them by dozens, and every night they come to our camp, making night hideous with their howls.

Soon we see some geese in an open ploughed field, but there is no getting near them, for they get up and pitch

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about half a mile down stream, on the banks of a pool. One gun goes forward, making a bend round to get into a good hiding-place for a shot at them when flying down stream; the other, taking advantage of the high bank, stalks up to where they alighted. The stalk is successful: five of the geese get up about 50 yards off—one drops stone dead and another gets away hard hit and is bagged down stream, but not until after a hard chase in a shallow pool, the bird diving several times till at last he gets into a water-weed bed, from which he cannot get out. With various luck we make our way down stream to the ford, where the Adowa-Axum road crosses the Assam, where we rest for a snack and let the other gun come up. One bag, so far, consists of four geese, and the other gun brings in another goose and a hare—not a bad beginning as far as the camp pot is concerned.

At the ford we are shown the battle-field between King John and Goobasi, the old claimant for the throne, which took place in 1871. King John was nearly surprised at Adowa by his enemy, and, thanks to Kirkham, who had one regiment of drilled troops that held the hills above the ford, with their rifles and the superior arms of King John he got from Lord Napier of Magdala, that gained him the day, Kirkham's regiment not losing a single man and doing great execution. Their position was strong, and as the Assam was in flood it could not be outflanked, and the only crossing was the ford. King John was greatly out-numbered —over three to one, his force only being about 3,000 men. It shows what discipline and good shooting will do in native warfare.

After listening to the account of the battle we went on with our shooting. The farther one goes from Adowa the

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more wooded the country becomes, the hills being covered with thick jungle, real hedges dividing some of the fields, and an occasional big tree standing in the centre of the fields. The banks of the stream become more wooded, and many of the pools full of fish of the barbel and chub species, many of which are rising at the flies, like trout. The fish do not run large, and I saw nothing over 2lb. weight—the majority run from four to eight ounces. With one gun on each side of the river some quarter of a mile off, looking for francolin, I take the river bank.

Near a big pool, surrounded by trees, I see three black duck paddling about; they are feeding down stream, so as soon as they get to the pool I hide behind a bush and send my boy round to the other end of the pool to drive them back. I get a splendid double shot and am rewarded with a couple of fat duck, both of which fall dead on the opposite bank. The shot disturbs a fine otter, which I only get a glimpse of, and I should have preferred his skin to the duck. Shots on my left tell me that the left gun has got among the francolin. We meet about another mile further on and then have to shoot a very goosey piece, in which we find nine birds and only bag two, I missing both my chances. We then beat a hill close to the river, as we can see round the bend and along the next stretch that it is blank. The hill yields a lot of francolin, which don't come to bag, a winged one giving us a long chase, and it ultimately gets away. Crossing the fallow fields I knock over a hare out of some rough grass, and just as I come to the river's bank three geese get up about 50 yards off; they are also missed by the others. The cackling of the geese as they fly down stream makes a lot of others get up, and, to our disgust, after making a large circle, they go away towards Adowa.

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We again cross the Assam, which winds very much here, and the landscape is now quite park-like.

The hills on the east side of the river are covered with timber and brushwood; large trees grow on each bank of the river, and on the west side grass and fallow land, dotted about with large forest trees and mimosas of different descriptions, the tassel mimosa, the flower of a light puce colour, with a light yellow end, being most gorgeous and in full bloom. The fields yield nothing except doves. The mimosa trees are perfect bee-hives, and the most splendid butterflies are sipping nectar from the flowers.

The park country ends abruptly in a small gorge with one waterfall and two long rapids of deep water. Before getting up to it and within fifty yards of the entrance some more geese are bagged, and then the bush is too thick for shooting. Just above the waterfall is a favourite place for the dog-faced monkeys, none of which are at home to-day.

A glimpse of a gazelle is seen, but he was too smart to get a shot at, and at last we come into a wider part of the gorge; I am ahead, as I have sent my boy to see if there are any duck in the gorge, and he has a rough climb over the rocks. I see two coming down, one, a good one, two yards in front of the other, and I aim at him, killing the bird behind, such a pace they are going, and miss clean with the second barrel. The bird falls in a pool, well in the middle, and Villiers goes down to the end of the pool to get it when it floats past; he reaches forward, his foot slips, and he gets the duck and a ducking. I laugh at him, and my foot also slips and I get wet to over the knees. We go forward and come under the shade of a big tree, and Villiers undresses and dries his clothes, as he is afraid of fever. I start on to pick out a camping ground for lunch and a noon-day rest.

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Going down stream through some very thick jungle I hear geese calling, so go on till I find an open space, and send one-eyed Mahomed down the stream bed to put them up. One goose perches on a branch of the tree I am hiding under, and gives me a shot. I take it sitting, at about fifteen yards, and down it comes with head and neck riddled. The others won't give me a chance. I choose a camp under a splendid india-rubber tree, which gives a magnificent shade, and the rest of the party soon come up, and we examine the bag, which consists of nine geese, two hares, three duck, two francolin. A pleasant lunch after the long walk and a snooze. Villiers sketches. We chaff the servants and amuse ourselves trying to get india-rubber. A thunderstorm threatens, and the sun is very hot, as it generally is before rain, so our afternoon sport does not last long. We, however, manage to bag three more geese, two francolin, and two stone plover, and we then take the road across the hills to Adowa, following part of the way the great south-western Abyssinian road, and then taking what we thought was a short cut across the hills to our camp. It is the shortest by about a mile, but the roughness makes it long, and it was quite dark when we reached camp and long past dinner hour. The mess president sat upon us for being late, and they had, as they thought, eaten all the soup, &c., but my old friend "cookie" soon put it all right, and he was delighted with the bag, for as I said to him, "I have given orders, cook, to my servants, to pluck the birds," there was not the usual, "Please, massa, too busy to pick all these birds."

Next morning I handed some of the geese over to the sailors and marines' mess, as they generally came badly off for "fluff and feather," having to live on beef and mutton.

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Another long day's sport and I will finish with our shooting round Adowa. The time for the King's arrival is getting near, when we shall all be busy and thinking about returning to the coast.

Next day brought a long outing. We left camp and made for the india-rubber tree, where we had formerly made our afternoon's halt, and here we lunched. We then shot up to the big gorge made by the hills that divide the country round Adowa from the Tacazze Valley. We left camp a little later than usual, after an early breakfast, and soon got over the hills into the valley, where the road to the south-west runs down. There is little of interest save a pretty church surrounded by trees some three miles to the south-west of Adowa, from which a beautiful view is obtainable; a set of curious springs in a grass meadow that forms a brook for about half a mile when it loses itself in a large green field in which there is splendid pasturage the whole year round.

Here we came up with about twenty damsels ranging from about eight to fifteen years old, under the care of two old men; they were going from Adowa to the banks of the Assam to get firewood, and they kept up with us for about two miles, laughing and chaffing with us, our servants acting as interpreters. One or two of them talked a little Arabic, so I got on pretty well. We made them race for money, and their romps seemed to please them greatly. There were not many yards of clothing amongst them, and Nature had endowed some of them with a fair amount of charms of which they did not seem aware. The old men chopped the wood and the young women carried it, and they appeared delighted with the idea that young ladies in England did not carry wood; that when they went out wore

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more clothes than they; and that only men cut and carried wood. With a little talking to I believe they would soon have mutinied and let the men work. We set the girls on to chaffing the men till they got angry, and as we had had as much fun out of them as possible, we went on at a trot to have some shooting before they disturbed the ground.

The river after leaving the india-rubber tree gets more sluggish, the pools being deeper, the shallows more rare, and the shooting more difficult, as it is impossible to see the river owing to the trees on the bank being so high. A dog is wanted to work the reed patches and banks. The jungle also comes nearer the river, and is more dense, leaving only one field between it and the banks. With dogs and beaters a large bag might be made, especially of hares and francolin, with a few partridge and an occasional gazelle. Leopard here and otters are numerous, and I came across an old goose with five young goslings not yet able to fly. Mahomed, the mule boy, and myself tried hard to catch them. The old goose was in an awful way and making a great hullabolluh. I shot a couple of goslings, which proved tender eating, and thus left the old lady with three instead of five children to console her. During our chase after the goslings my mule fought with the pack mule and upset our lunch. Fortunately it was not damaged. My mule, however, ran away towards Adowa and got caught by our female friends of the morning. I came across a splendid otter during the chase and could have shot him easily only I had put down my gun.

I explored the gorge for about three miles when, the river getting narrower and more rapid, and the hill sides denser and nearer the perpendicular, I was obliged to give the shooting prospects up as a bad job, so we returned to a spot on the

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river's bed where there was a good shade and partook of our noon-day meal. Meantime we had a heavy thunder shower, and not till it was over did we return, taking the road by which we had come.

I would not advise any sportsman to go to Adowa for shooting, but some sport is to be had in the neighbourhood, and I only mention these day's outings to show that one need not mope in camp and that one can thoroughly enjoy one's self with what sport there is in such a fair climate, even in the hottest of weather.

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CHAPTER XVI.

ABYSSINIA AND EGYPT.

Before the King arrives it is worth while knowing something of what he is King of—how he got to be King and of the country he governs. I do not pretend to be an historian, but I have every reason to believe that what I write is correct, and will give a fair idea of what has taken place since the English expedition in 1868 up to the present time. One thing is patent to all who knows anything of this part of the world—never before in this century has there been such a respected King, a King that has done less harm and more good, than the present ruler. Yet he is a man who has had more European intrigue to put up with, and who has had more overtures made him to have political dealings with European Powers than any of his predecessors. The Greeks are the only people that have tried to have commercial dealings, and they, as history will tell, have failed.

Immediately after the departure of the English expedition from Zullah in 1868 England lost all interest in Abyssinia, and instead of the Government keeping a certain watch over the country, such as could enable their merchants to make something out of the country by trade and have some return

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for the millions they expended of the tax-payers' and merchants' money, they did nothing. An English officer generally leaves a favourable impression behind in the minds of the natives, no matter to what country he goes, and even in a fanatical country he is respected as a brave warrior. No officer in no matter what country has left such a universally respected name as Lord Napier of Magdala, and had his advice been followed by the Foreign Office, King John's country would long ago have been opened for trade.

Lord Napier left Kassai, as King John was then called, as Prince of Tigre, a vassal of the late King Theodore. He was the only likely person left in the country to carve his way to the throne. Lord Napier left him arms and ammunition, and Kirkham, a sergeant in the army, who had been with General Gordon in China, took service with Prince Kassai. His supporters were principally the peasants of Senaafe in the Inderta province and those of Tigre. His chief supporters and most able men were his uncle, Ras Areya, the younger brother of King John's father, Dedajtch Bario Gaber, Ras Bariou (afterwards killed in battle by Walad-el-Michael or sometimes called Waldenkel), Ras Aloula, Shum Agamie, Welda Gabriel, a connection of King John's, and Walad-el-Michael, a claimant to the principality of Hamasen. King John's greatest opponent was Goobasie, descended in the female line from Ouvieh, King of Abyssinia, and he was one of the first to fall. On his being taken prisoner the central part of Abyssinia from Gondar to Hamasen was quiet. The Wolloo Gallas were the next to submit, then Menelek, of Shoa, swore allegiance, and his country was not invaded.

This brings us up to the end of 1872 till early in 1873. King John was then master of the whole of Abyssinia proper. It was fairly quiet, well governed, and, from all accounts, a

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prosperous trade was going on. The people could breathe freely after the atrocious and horrible cruelties perpetrated by Theodore. They were fairly pleased with their new King, who was encouraging trade and cultivation. King John, with the exception of the one black cloud on his horizon, namely, Alamayou, King Theodore's son, was fairly happy and knew that as long as he was alive he was a usurper to the throne, that he held it by the sword alone, and that there was still a liking in Abyssinia to the old descendants of royalty in preference to the soldier of fortune who, although he had won the crown by the sword, and with due solemnity had been pronounced King, was still likely to be upset by the return of the natural heir.

Troubles then commenced to come thicker upon King John. An intrigue, which he knew nothing about, began as early as 1869, and its moving spirit was Munzinger, who was acting as English and French Vice-Consul. It was evident that when Munzinger found King John had the cards in his hand, and that by informing the French Government he could effect his dismissal, and with the French and Prussian war breaking out in 1870 he saw there was no chance of France interfering with Abyssinian politics. Munzinger, therefore, offered his services to the Egyptian Government.

His joint intriguer was Walad-el-Michael. King John had intercepted the latter's letters to the Emperor of the French, offering the Hamasen to France provided he was employed under France, and Walad-el-Michael was thrown into prison. Munzinger married a Hamasen woman of low morals (a daughter of a small farmer), and he gave out that she was one of the old princesses of the Hamasen. This enraged King John, and the protection of runaways from Abyssinia

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at Massowah by Munzinger, who granted them French protection, also annoyed the King, who looked upon all Munzinger's actions as personal insults to his authority, which, doubtless, they were, and were intended to be.

Munzinger then went to Cairo and was made Governor of Massowah. One of his first actions as such was to annex the Bogos country, situated to the north of the Hamasen, and commanding the best road to Cassala from the coast. From Sanheit or Keren, the only town of importance in the Bogos country, raids can easily be made into the Hamasen. Bogos had always paid tribute to Abyssinia, and the majority of its inhabitants were Christians; there were also several Abyssinian churches in the district.* Munzinger's movement on the Bogos was a very rapid one, and he immediately fortified a hill in the centre of the plateau, the time chosen being when King John was on the borders of Godjam with his army, trying to settle the Shoa question with King Menelek, the Galla ruler. On King John hearing of the annexation of Bogos he wrote to Ismael Pasha, the Viceroy of Egypt, and said that he might keep the Bogos if he would only enter into peace, make no further annexations, and allow free trade to go on through Massowah with his country. There can be no doubt at that moment if Alamayoa had been sent back to Abyssinia King John would have acknowledged him, and would have placed him firmly on the throne. Ismael Pasha's answer to King John was an increase of garrisons at Massowah and Sanheit, and a claim for the whole of the Hamasen, the boundary to be fixed between the two countries at the Mareb river. This preposterous claim was met with indignation throughout the length and

* A sure sign of Abyssinian occupation and predominacy.

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breadth of Abyssinia, and in a quiet way King John set to work organizing his army and getting together stocks of provisions at Adowa.

Walad-el-Michael also asked pardon from King John and promised to get together the whole of his followers in the Hamasen and bring them to Adowa to fight against the invaders. It is a matter of conjecture whether Walad-el-Michael was sincere or whether he made the opportunity a pretext to get together another following so as to be a power and aid the winning side. His subsequent behaviour rather goes to prove he was insincere, as he was imbued with no spirit of religious fanaticism, and afterwards sided with the Moslem against his own countrymen and his own religion.

No doubt King John believed that it was a very different thing to intrigue with Christians, who had great wealth, than with the cursed Moslem and their poverty. It was an evil day for King John when he let Walad-el-Michael have his liberty, and the mischief done by him to Abyssinia and its cause was great. He was the peg on which Ismael hung his tarbush; he was to Egypt the shield for their own intrigues, and Ismael worked him in the same pleasant manner he did the Consul-Generals in Cairo. I can imagine him button-holing our Consul-Generals and those of other powers, either in Abdeen Palace or at Gezereh or Geseh, and giving them what they could not get hold of, namely, information from Abyssinia, as to why the money was being spent and the troops sent there. The Abyssinians, flying from a barbarous and savage monarch, seeking the protection of the uninterested Viceroy, who was only trying to carry civilization into dark and cannibal countries to let in the light and good government of civilized and progressive

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Egypt. It was a time when nothing was impossible for the Egyptians and their enlightened ruler to undertake. Dust had been thrown in the eyes of England and the European Powers by Sir Samuel Baker's great and really hazardous undertaking, viz., his advance to the Lakes and annexation of territory for the supposed suppression of the slave trade.

Gordon was in the Soudan, but was not known to the public except through his Chinese laurels, and the public had not had time to see whether he was a success, and his Abyssinian business did not commence till 1876. Ismael was master of the situation, and there was no one to advise him that he was going too far; there was a lust for annexation of territory, new fields to be opened for commerce, and streams of dollars and produce to return fourfold for the gold and troops expended. The Abyssinian question was the rock Ismael split on and got wrecked, and brought the lust of conquest to a close.

Munzinger again visited Cairo, and what took place there will be always one of the secrets of Egyptian history. The result of the visit was this, that more troops were sent to Massowah. Arekeel Bey, a nephew of Nubar Pasha, was supposed to be in military and civil command of the expedition, and was accompanied by Colonel Arvendrup Bey, a Danish officer belonging to the Staff of the Egyptian army. Count Zichy, an Austrian officer, also was with the expedition. In October everything was ready for an advance; part of the troops, mostly blacks, started from Sanheit and advanced into the Hamasen. Another column started from Massowah by the Kiagour road; the force joined at Koodofelasie and went on with their advance. The Hamasen, having been denuded of its fighting-men, offered no opposi-

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tion, and the Egyptian army, as far as rations were concerned, were in clover, and ate its way like locusts through the country.

A day of reckoning was to take place, and that shortly. King John sent messages to the Egyptians, asking them to go back from his territory. The Viceroy's instructions were to take Adowa, and then dictate terms of peace, the frontier to be the Mareb, or if that was not strategically the correct position, Adowa and the Tacazze as frontier. Oh! lack of knowledge of geography; oh! Intelligence Department; and oh! poor Ismael, thinking you were going to have a walk-over, and believing in the parasites and blood-suckers that surrounded you! The answer to King John was the Mareb river, and peace negotiations to take place at Adowa. This was virtually making a conquered nation of Abyssinia, and negotiations were broken off. The Egyptian force was stationed in a fortified camp at Gundet, with reserves on the high plateau of Adi-quāla. The Abyssinians were at Adowa, with their advance guard at Lala and scouts round Gundet. The advance took place from Gundet on the 7th of November, soon after daylight. The battle raged nearly the whole day, and on that November day Egypt tasted the first of her many defeats that followed. Zichy lived for a few days after the battle, taken care of by King John. The other leaders died in battle. From a defeat the battle ended in a rout, and it was hie across country to Sanheit as fast as possible.

A ragged, tattered, demoralized crowd crossed the frontier, having been harried *en route* by the peasants, who let them pass in peace on their way up. The result of Gundet was to greatly strengthen King John's position. On the same day that Gundet was fought, and early in the morning, fate decreed

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that the instigator and promoter of the troubles between Egypt and Abyssinia should also meet his death, but not by the hands of Christians. Munzinger had taken a force of about 400 men from Tajurrah. He had been in correspondence with Menelek, King of Shoa, who had agreed to aid the Egyptians against King John from the south. Here, again, the Intelligence Department was wrong, as from the time the northern army crossed the borders it gave no time for Munzinger to act. The time was miscalculated, and the force employed from Tajurrah a great deal too weak ever to expect to fight its way through the savage Danakils. Berbérah and Zeilah Harar road was then not open, nor had Harar been taken by the Egyptians. Munzinger, his intriguing sham princess, and child were killed, and about three-fourths of his force.

No true record of what had taken place had been published; it was known in well-informed circles that the Egyptian expedition against Abyssinia had met with reverses, but not with annihilation. Everything nearly was planned and arranged for reinforcements to be sent before the news of defeat had been discussed. There was a mistake. How could disciplined troops, armed with the most modern and approved artillery and arms of precision, commanded by men who had seen service, be beaten by an undisciplined lot of tatterdemalions armed with old muskets and a few arms given them by Lord Napier of Magdala? There shall be no want of force this time. Shall Egypt be stopped in her civilizing career by an uneducated savage?

The result of the second expedition was more disastrous than the first, although this time Egyptian gold had won over Walad-el-Michael, and he had fought against his old companions in arms and compatriots. Early in 1876 King

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John's star, one would have thought, was on the decline; he had not a very bright outlook considering the reports that were spread of the enormous army coming against him, the Hamasen, owing to Walad-el-Michael's force being against him, and Menelek, always hesitating to attack from the south, having thrown his promises to the wind, and now being outwardly and unmistakably unfriendly. The defeat of the Egyptians was perfect; they left everything they brought with them behind—commissariat, ordnance, treasure-chest, rifles and side arms of the soldiers, and all the tools and material they brought for the permanent occupation of the country.

There is no doubt that after the battle of Gura in March, 1876, that atrocities were committed by the soldiers of both sides. When both are in fault and both throw mud the most vehement mud-thrower will certainly get some to stick. King John complained about the slave trade, and that children from his country were made eunuchs of. Anyone can verify the truth of this on any Sunday afternoon in the Shubra drive at Cairo, as there are specimens of his countrymen on the boxes of the harem carriages. Proofs of his cruelty are stowed away in Egypt among the fellaheen, and are not paraded on the carriage boxes of Pashas, which certainly on their part shows a want of patriotism, of which they were supposed to have a plethora. It is a fact that a great many of the Egyptian prisoners were unsexed, and recovered, and were sent back to Massowah with this message, dictated, no doubt, in the flush of victory, when fanaticism is rampant—"Here are your soldiers, Ismael; if you want any more eunuchs for your harems drive me up the rest of your army."

King John having finished off the Egyptians, left Ras

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Bariou with a small army to watch the frontier, and hastened off south to have a turn at Menelek, who had crossed the frontier, and was looting, massacring, and destroying his southern provinces. The Tucazze was in flood, and the rains had commenced, rendering his progress naturally slow, and it was not till the winter months that he could really strike a blow. He was well received everywhere as the preserver of the country and his faith, and everyone gave large tribute and homage to him. A short and decisive campaign laid the throne of Shoa at his feet. Menelek paid him homage, prostrated himself before an assembly of the notables, and placed King John's foot on his neck as his vassal and a conquered man. King John, instead of behaving as a barbarous monarch, and exacting reprisals, was contented with the homage paid, and suggested that, as he had already the title of King of Kings of Ethiopia, Menelek should go on ruling the country, and that as King Menelek had only one daughter and no other children, and he had only one son, Ras Areya Selassie, and that both were of tender years, they should marry, and on the death of Menelek and King John that Ras Areya Selassie should govern the two countries. This was agreed to, and King John returned to Tigre and the centre part of his country to go on with the governing of his dominions.

It was during his return from Shoa that Gordon Pasha and I first became acquainted, in April, 1877, with Abyssinian politics, and renewed an old family acquaintance of over 50 years' standing, his family and mine having lived at Woolwich for years.

In April, 1877, the position of affairs in Abyssinia and the frontier was this. There was an armistice between the two countries, and that was all. Egypt was protecting and

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feeding the arch-traitor Walad-el-Michael, who was raiding the country. The Massowah and Sanheit garrisons were large, the former unnecessarily so, and among its members were Osman Pasha Rifki and Colonel Arabi, two people who were hereafter to play important parts in Egyptian history. The animus of the latter when he came into power was directed mostly against his old superior officer at Massowah, who when Arabi first created his disturbances was Minister of War, a reward doubtless gained on account of his dishonest and immoral practices at Khartoum.

Gordon's knowledge of natives and Egyptian subordinates, and of how far they could be trusted, induced him to make hasty proposals to Abyssinia without having time to study the question between the two countries; I having been told by Colonel Gordon that as far as the Abyssinian question was concerned he had received no information from the Khedive or the survivors of the expedition, and the lips of the Cairo people were sealed; they did not want to talk about the subject, and that he was to do his best.

The terms he offered Abyssinia were chiefly the following, and were accepted by King John more on account of the manly and straightforward communications made to him by Gordon, who he knew to be an Englishman and a Christian, instead of an Egyptian and a Moslem:—

The frontier to be the same as before the war.

The armistice to continue.

Free pardon for refugees on both sides with the exception of Walad-el-Michael.

Walad-el-Michael to be kept away from the frontier, and Egypt to be responsible for his actions.

Free commerce between the two countries, with the exception of arms and ammunition.

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A certain quantity of arms, powder, shot, and caps to be imported for the King's private use every year.

On Colonel Gordon receiving an answer from Ras Aloula representing the King that these terms would be accepted, he left Sanheit, *vid* Cassala, for Khartoum, where his presence was urgently needed. I was at Sanheit with Colonel Gordon at the time, and on his leaving I remained behind for a short while to see what was going on, and then returned to Massowah, where I had a good deal to do with Osman Pasha Rifki, and again saw Achmed Arabi, the Egyptian, then a Commissariat officer, a lucrative post, and one of which, from all accounts, the plunder was not fairly divided. Walad-el-Michael was then in the northern Bogos country, a nonentity, and of no cause of annoyance to either country, as he had but few followers.

Soon after Gordon's departure Osman Pasha Rifki went to Sanheit, and immediately lent an ear to the intrigues of Walad-el-Michael. It has always been the habit of Egyptian Governors on the Abyssinian frontier to keep a pet robber to annoy the Abyssinians, and Osman Pasha Rifki, being above the usual class of Governor, kept a bigger robber than the others have done. He provided Walad-el-Michael with Remington rifles, cartridges, and food, and let him out to harry the Hamasen, which from a garden he turned into a wilderness, and on one of these raids the Abyssinian General Ras Bariou, and over 1,000 troops, were cut to pieces. This was carrying on the armistice with a vengeance. A little before this the same Osman Pasha Rifki had managed to finish off Kirkham. An Abyssinian messenger from the King, that was quartered on board an Egyptian transport instead of with his countryman on shore, was found drowned in the harbour, and the verdict

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was "the drunken pig had fallen overboard." The Abyssinian envoys had been not well received in Cairo, and after such treatment it was not to be wondered at that Colonel Gordon's name, through no fault of his, was not so much respected as when he started with a clean bill of health on his voyage among the rocks and shoals of Abyssinian and Egyptian politics.

King John had all the time been consolidating his power in Abyssinia, but was still likely enough to yield the throne to Alamayou, and be his Protector until he had come of age or knew how to govern his country. His only cause of annoyance was Walad-el-Michael and the way in which Egypt backed him up.*

Osman Pasha Rifki was removed to Khartoum and acted as Governor-General during Gordon's absence. Aliedeen Pasha, known to those Englishmen who came for sporting purposes to the Soudan as Aliedeen Bey—a different stamp of man entirely from Rifki, and the only Pasha that served under Gordon in the Soudan that was not discharged for dishonest and corrupt practices—Aliedeen Pasha died with Hicks Pasha at Melbris, and the Viceroy lost an honest and good man, and the English a friend. Aliedeen was not a clever man; his great point was his integrity and straightforward conduct. Show him a reform that was for the good of the country, and he would carry it out. He lived and learned, and tried to do good, while other Governor-Generals and Pashas tried, and succeeded, in their short service, in doing every possible mischief.

Under Aliedeen Pasha a much better feeling existed be-

* Gordon, finding he could do nothing with Walad-el-Michael, and that he was too strong for him unless he got together large reinforcements, proposed to King John a joint attack on Walad-el-Michael. The negotiations failed, and Gordon could neither spare the men nor the money.

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tween Ras Aloula, who had charge of the frontier and the Egyptians; trade was encouraged and the Massowah Customs and receipts increased. Aliedeen carried out Gordon's instructions in a capable manner, and Walad-el-Michael's power was on the wane. This commenced immediately after Gordon's last visit to Massowah in 1878, when he learnt what had taken place between Walad-el-Michael and Osman Pasha Rifki—the latter was then at Khartoum, acting Governor-General. Gordon again made overtures to Ras Aloula for a conjoint attack on Walad-el-Michael, which was not altogether well received by the Abyssinian general, who thought that he could win over Walad-el-Michael's followers by giving them a free pardon, and getting them to join him, with their arms given them by the Egyptians. This he was successful in doing, and Walad-el-Michael's power was broken and he gave no more trouble, and not being supported by any Egyptian Pasha he soon became a nonentity, and got so tired of the life he was leading that he gave in his submission to the King, who pardoned him and allowed him his liberty in his own village of Hasega, in the Hamasen. He had not been there a month when he was found intriguing with the Massowah people. Ras Aloula immediately imprisoned him, and he was consigned to the State prison of Amba Salama, where all the noted State prisoners are kept. This is the last that ever will be heard of the noted Walad-el-Michael. As far as his character was concerned there was nothing to recommend him, and there was no redeeming feature in it—an intriguer of the lowest description, cruel, unfaithful, untrue to his country and his religion, dirty in his habits, and an Abyssinian monster in every sense of the word.

In 1879, in the month of August, no peace had been signed between Egypt and Abyssinia, and the Governor-

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Generals of the Eastern Soudan still deemed it necessary to keep up larger garrisons than were needed, and they always fancied that King John at any time might declare war. There was really no cause for this fear, and it arose from the ordinary six-monthly levy of taxes by Ras Aloula and his soldiers on the debatable territory on which Abyssinia had always collected taxes, this collecting of revenue always being turned into a threatened invasion.

On Tewfik Pasha commencing his reign he wished the frontier question settled, and he asked Colonel Gordon to undertake the work. It was known throughout the length and breadth of the Soudan that Gordon's time was over and that he never would return as Governor-General. Already the good that he had done in the country was being rapidly changed, and the reaction to bad from good was going on at an alarming extent. To anyone who knew Soudan politics it was patent that Gordon could not return, nor could he take up his position again when in the Ministry at Cairo, which he would be under, were some of his greatest enemies —Pashas whom he had discharged from the Soudan for dishonesty. His mission to King John, as I foretold, was a failure for many reasons. Firstly, King John had written to Cairo to say he would not make peace unless it was through another power to arbitrate between the two countries, and would have no direct dealings. Secondly, the terms that Gordon had made in April, 1877, had not been carried out on the part of Egypt. Thirdly, he was not allowed to give up any territory that Egypt had occupied. Fourthly, there was no frontier proposed, and fifthly, Gordon was going up as an Egyptian Pasha instead of an independent person, and it was well-known to King John, through the Greek Consul, that Gordon had tendered his resig-

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nation, and that the Soudan was already split up into two different Pashalics, namely, that of the Eastern and Western Soudan.

It is a matter of history that Gordon's Mission was a failure, but the reasons I don't think are known; therefore I have given them. As far as bad treatment in the country was concerned, European intrigue has to be thanked for it, and for the time taken over the journey Gordon was alone to blame, as he told Ras Aloula that if hostilities commenced he would most likely be the General in command, so there was no other course left to Ras Aloula but to hide from him the military and best roads to the interior.

After Gordon's return in December, 1879, and after the death of Alamayou, the King's only opponent to the throne, King John set about establishing himself more firmly and arranging with the minor kings for the succession on his demise. Ras Areya Selassie was married, with great pomp, to Zohdeta, the daughter of King Menelek of Shoa, and it was agreed by all concerned that on the death of King John his son should succeed him, under the title of the King of Kings. The years 1880, 1881, and 1882, and part of 1883, were years of peace for the country. The only cause of annoyance was the conduct of the Italians with their annexation of coast, which King John interpreted as a wish for the interior as well. In the autumn of 1882 Debbub, son of Ras Areya, and therefore first cousin to the King, ran away from his country, on account of not being given a governorship, and commenced looting the Abyssinian frontier from Egyptian territory in 1883. He got protected by the Governor of Massowah, Monktar Bey, one of the worst description of Egyptian officials, and in 1883 the Governor, or Barrambarras, of the Dembelas also had to flee his

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country on account of dishonest behaviour, and sought the protection of Kusruf Bey, the Governor of Sanheit. These two outlaws nearly brought the King and his army down upon the Egyptians and caused the uneasy feeling that existed in December, 1883.

King John is now King of Kings of all Abyssinia, and the territory over which he rules is well defined in the north, east, and west. The southern part of his dominions are vague, but it is supposed that through King Menelek of Shoa and King Tchlaihaimanout of the South-Western Gallas, that his power extends nominally through nearly the whole of the Galla country. There is no doubt that the conquests of King Tchlaihaimanout increase every season, and that he is working his way more and more every year to the south-west, and procuring more of the coffee-growing country, the gold-yielding districts, and the ivory trade, all of which European merchants will be able to obtain as soon as trade is thoroughly established.

King Menelek reigns over the Shoa district with his capital at Ankober.* King Tchlaihaimanout's district extends from the south of Lake Tsana into the Galla country, following the Blue Nile river till it strikes the low country to the west, and then south to the Limou, Gimou, and Bagafar Gallas. He is also Vice-King of Godjam province. King Tchlaihaimanout was known before as Ras Adul, and is descended in the female line from the old Kings of Abyssinia. He was born at Debra Tabor, is about 35 years old, well-educated for an Abyssinian, and a great favourite of the King's.

Ras Areya Selassie, the King's only son, and heir to the

* A very good map of Abyssinia is sold by Wild, of Charing Cross, and King John's territory and Governorates can be followed on it.

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throne, governs and holds the Governorates of Adowa and its surroundings, and that of the Walloo Gallas, just to the south of Magdala.

Ras Michael, an adopted son of the King's, holds the honorary post of Vice-Governor of all Ras Areya Selassie's territory. Ras Michael was a Galla Mahomedan, named Mahomed Ali. He turned Christian and was baptised when he was very young, and the King, taking a fancy to him when a child, adopted him.

Dedajtch Bario Gaber, a great friend of the King's, holds the provinces of Halai, Senafe, and Digsa.

Ras Areya, the King's uncle, father of the outlaw Debbub, holds the Inderta Province, the old capital of which was Chelicut, but now removed to Micaley, where the King is building his palace and his favourite residence.

Mengasha, the King's nephew, holds the Adi-abo province; Shum Agamie Welda Gabriel, a relation of the King's, holds the Agammie district, and Ras Aloula holds the country from the Hababs to the Mareb river.

The only one of these Governors and Kings who has ever been a source of annoyance to King John has been Menelek of Shoa, but he, since the marriage of his daughter with the King's son, has settled down in a peaceful manner, and no danger need now be apprehended from him, as he has everything to lose and nothing to gain by making war, and would be crushed in a very short time if he tried to dispute the King's will. From the others there is no fear, as they are all loyal. Ras Areya, the King's uncle, was always given to intriguing, and he has only a small province to look after now, and is always under the King's eyes. The old man is now in his dotage.*

* Since dead.

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The European intrigues that have been going on are hard to follow. The result has only been to make the King suspicious of all Europeans with the exception of Englishmen, whom he respects and would be very willing to see more of. The French mission at Sanheit was always a nuisance to the King, and when a weak religious Consul was at Massowah, of which there have been several, the old Archbishop in charge did pretty well what he liked, and, as in old feudal times, religion and politics went together, and there was always a hankering after friendly relations with outlaws at the expense of King John. It was explained to me that it was better to live in harmony with all men—a thing I don't wish for one moment to doubt—but what I did doubt, and used to explain myself pretty plainly about, was the wisdom of a mission, which was entirely peaceful, mixing themselves up with things entirely foreign to their avocations and compromising themselves with the three contending parties, viz., the Abyssinians, the Egyptians, and the outlaws. Gordon always tried to get rid of the mission, but could not well do so, as when Munzinger occupied the Bogos country he took over the mission, which was then established there, for good or for bad, as the case might be. It proved for the bad. Through the French mission, France has always her fingers in the pie, and claims to be interested in the country, and doubtless always regrets that in 1870-71 she was too busy to interfere in Abyssinian politics, as she would have certainly accepted the Hamasen, with its nearly European climate and its natural productiveness. The opportunity is gone, and she has no cause to interfere unless they are willing to sacrifice a Consul, or a priest or two, to have an object and a cause for occupying the country. I fancy France would find it a much harder nut to crack than either

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their Tunisian or Madagascar business. The French Consuls at Massowah have been busy going backwards and forwards very frequently, and they always manage to get up the same time as any of the foreign missions, and they have been most likely helping the Italians and the Greeks, and forwarding their interests. I doubt whether their one subject at Adowa, or their small mission at Halai, in Abyssinia proper, demands so much attention. It is most amusing hearing the accounts from the different Consuls of what their colleagues are doing, and I am always amused when breakfasting with them. Breakfast at Massowah is always at noon, and is the meal which one is invited to—never to dinner. I always succeed in "drawing" my host and get some information from him. Generally in a weak moment he lets something out which he ought not to. Many and many a laugh have I had with Ras Aloula over foreign politics, and he is equally capable of "drawing" persons. Unfortunately, the King takes things in a serious light and gets annoyed, and will listen to others talking about what their country can do, and it generally ends with a personal requirement. I know for certain that King John has never been offered any scheme for the improvement of his country, and the visits of all the Consuls have been for selling arms and ammunition through a third party. Some of these arms have been seized by the Egyptians near Massowah.

The Italians have been the most persevering in their endeavours to have commercial intercourse with the Abyssinians, but as their overtures have always been made after further annexation of coast they have not been successful. They have been received on all occasions by King John with marked courtesy; he has been willing to aid them as far as possible through the border tribes on their way to the coast,

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but as yet no Italian has solved the riddle of getting from their Assab possessions to Abyssinia or from Abyssinia back to the coast. As long as they set about doing it in the way they have hitherto done they will not succeed, and no one is more perfectly aware of it than King John. At first he was seriously alarmed at their actions, but now he looks upon them as a nation that will never win foothold in his country from their present basis of operations, or that as merchants they will ever be able to win the affection of his people, or interchange the manufactures of their country for the produce of his. The dollar is not a natural product of Italy, and it is a scarce commodity from all accounts in that country. Macaroni and olive oil the Abyssinians do not eat; the few old guns they have to dispose of will find a market among the peasants; trade they have none that they can barter of their own manufacture, so must buy from England and other producing countries. Their religion being Roman Catholic, it is against their getting on in the country, as the King now, with but one or two exceptions, does not tolerate priests of this persuasion, and dislikes this form of worship and its teachings, for it has always been mixed up with political movements.

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